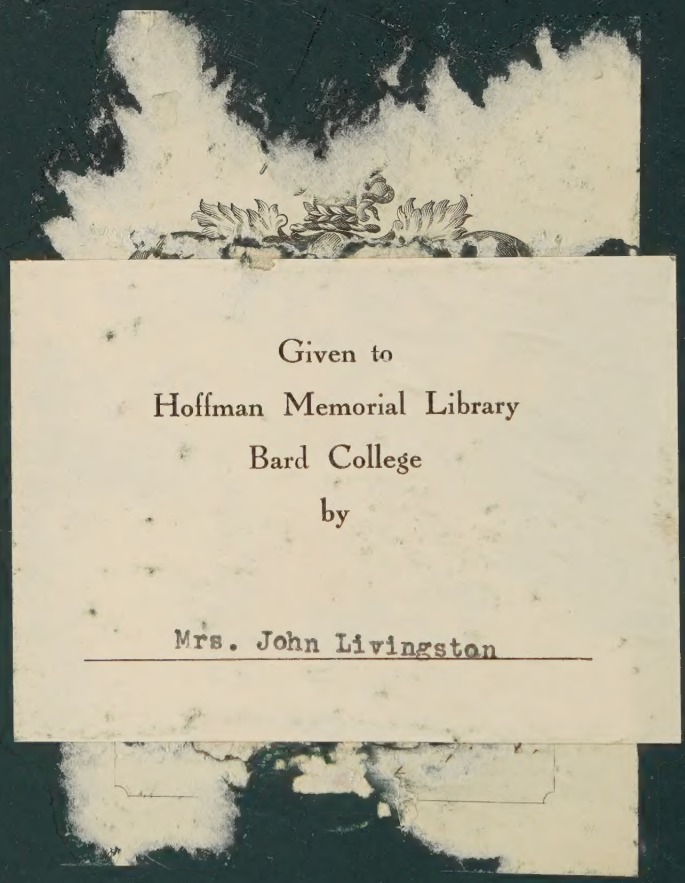
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POEMS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

THE LOOM OF YEARS.

THE FLOWER OF OLD JAPAN.

POEMS

BY

ALFRED NOYES

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MCMIV

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TO

MY LADY BEN.

"Che farò senza il mio Ben?"
—ORFEO.

Not to hope of aught from fame
This poor gift you owe,
Ben; for none will know your name
None will seek to know:
You yourself will hardly care
Much to find your new name there.

Oh; I know—"a frugal gift,"
You will smile, no doubt:
Well—at least no studious thrift
Kept my heart's blood out
Here: no dainty jewelled pen
Played with what God gave me, Ben.

These at least may hope to live
Yet some while above
Me whom Love will not forgive
Nor forget to love;
Bright-eyes, Great-heart, you will take
These, my best, for old sake's sake?

Then, ah since I never wrote
Save from my full heart,
Love perhaps will sometimes note
Where the tears would start,
And the lines grow dim and blurred
Round some half-remembered word.

Yes; and since I hardly prayed
Save at the unknown shrine,
Where all these in faith were laid,
Love's own faith, not mine,
Faith in Love that none shall find
Till all songs be out of mind;

Though for foolish moments throned,
I—at Love's command—
Felt—like thousands—that I owned
Shakespeare's heart and hand;
Ay; and though this dust alone
Stay to show what dreams are gone;

Take them; though 'twere but for one
Memory—not of me;
Memory of a day that's done
Now—eternally;
For the loss that linked us then
Ere I knew or named you—Ben,

Not for my sake, not for yours,
Just for "auld lang syne";
For the love that still endures
Yet was never mine;
For the hope I never knew,
Take my claim to memory, too.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
APES AND IVORY	1
LOVE'S ROSARY	3
PIRATES	5
SHERWOOD	7
THE WORLD'S MAY-QUEEN	10
A SONG OF ENGLAND	14
STATESMEN	17
THE PHANTOM FLEET	20
SILK O' THE KINE	26
BLACKBERRIES	36
THE LORDING'S DAUGHTER	37
THE DEAD RIVAL	39
IN GREAT WATERS	42
LESSONS	49
PASSING	51
THE DEAD MAN SPEAKS	53
THE DIVINE LOVER	56

THE WOMAN-SOUL 57
A WOMAN'S WAY 60
WINNIE AND DAFF 61
THE OLD SCEPTIC 63
THE GRANDFATHER 66
THE DEATH OF CHOPIN 69
IN VANITY FAIR 73
A NIGHT AT ST HELENA 75
SONG 92
STRANGERS 93
ERE THE WINTER 95
LOVE IN AUTUMN 97
THE DOG-ROSE 99
THE LAST WORD 101
BUTTERFLIES 102
DREAM VOICES 111
SONG OF THE WOODEN-LEGGED FIDDLER . . 113
THE FISHER-GIRL 115
A SONG OF TWO BURDENS 119
WAITING—WESTERN COAST 121
EARTH-BOUND 123
A SONG OF EXILE 126
THE LAST TRYST 128
ART 130
THE OPTIMIST 131
LOVE'S AGONY 134
AFTER PARTING 137

THE CHOICE 138
A LOVERS' QUARREL 142
THE SHADOWY RIVER 144
THE UNIVERSALIST 146
THE BARREL-ORGAN 151
LOVE'S CONFESSIONAL 157
SONG 161
DE PROFUNDIS 162
SONG 165
IN THE CROWD 166
THE SWEET O' THE YEAR 174
THE DWARF'S TRAGEDY 178
THE LAST BATTLE 186
THE PARADOX 188
THE PROGRESS OF LOVE: A LYRICAL SYMPHONY . 195

POEMS.

APES AND IVORY.

Apes and ivory, skulls and roses, in junks of old Hong-Kong,
Gliding over a sea of dreams to a haunted shore of song,
Masts of gold and sails of satin, shimmering out of the East,
Oh, Love has little need of you now to make his heart a feast.

Or is it an elephant, white as milk and bearing a severed head
That tatters his broad soft wrinkled flank in tawdry patches of red,
With a negro giant to walk beside and a temple dome above,
Where ruby and emerald shatter the sun,—is it these that should
please my love?

Or is it a palace of pomegranates, where ivory-limbed young slaves
Lure a luxury out of the noon in the swooning fountain's waves;
Or couch like cats and sun themselves on the warm white marble
brink?
Oh, Love has little to ask of these, this day in May, I think.

Is it Lebanon cedars or purple fruits of the honeyed southern air,
Spikenard, saffron, roses of Sharon, cinnamon, calamus, myrrh,
A bed of spices, a fountain of waters, or the wild white wings of a dove,
Now, when the winter is over and gone, is it these that should please my love?

The leaves outburst on the hazel-bough and the hawthorn's heaped wi' flower,
And God has bidden the crisp clouds build my love a lordlier tower,
Taller than Lebanon, whiter than snow, in the fresh blue skies above;
And the wild rose wakes in the winding lanes of the radiant land I love.

Apes and ivory, skulls and roses, in junks of old Hong-Kong,
Gliding over a sea of dreams to a haunted shore of song,
Masts of gold and sails of satin, shimmering out of the East,
Oh, Love has little need of you now to make his heart a feast.

LOVE'S ROSARY.

All day I tell my rosary
For now my love's away:
To-morrow he shall come to me
About the break of day;
A rosary of twenty hours,
And then a rose of May;
A rosary of fettered flowers,
And then a holy-day.

All day I tell my rosary,
My rosary of hours:
And here's a flower of memory,
And here's a hope of flowers,
And here's an hour that yearns with pain
For old forgotten years,
An hour of loss, an hour of gain,
And then a shower of tears.

All day I tell my rosary,
Because my love's away;
And never a whisper comes to me,
And never a word to say;

But, if it's parting more endears,
God bring him back, I pray;
Or my heart will break in the darkness
Before the break of day.

All day I tell my rosary,
My rosary of hours,
Until an hour shall bring to me
The hope of all the flowers. . . .
I tell my rosary of hours,
For O, my love's away;
And—a dream may bring him back to me
About the break of day.

PIRATES.

Come to me, you with the laughing face, in the night as I lie
Dreaming of days that are dead and of joys gone by;
Come to me, comrade, come through the slow-dropping rain,
Come from your grave in the darkness and let us be playmates again.

Let us be boys together to-night, and pretend as of old
We are pirates at rest in a cave among huge heaps of gold,
Red Spanish doubloons and great pieces of eight, and muskets and swords,
And a smoky red camp-fire to glint, you know how, on our ill-gotten hoards.

The old cave in the fir-wood that slopes down the hills to the sea
Still is haunted, perhaps, by young pirates as wicked as we:
Though the fir with the magpie's big mud-plastered nest used to hide it so well,
And the boys in the gang had to swear that they never would tell.

Ah, that tree; I have sat in its boughs and looked seaward for hours;
I remember the creak of its branches; the scent of the flowers
That climbed round the mouth of the cave: it is odd I recall
Those little things best, that I scarcely took heed of at all.

I remember how brightly the brass on the butt of my spy-glass gleamed
As I climbed through the purple heather and thyme to our eyrie and dreamed;
I remember the smooth glossy sun-burn that darkened our faces and hands
As we gazed at the merchantmen sailing away to those wonderful lands.

I remember the long long sigh of the sea as we raced in the sun,
To dry ourselves after our swimming; and how we would run
With a cry and a crash through the foam as it creamed on the shore,
Then back to bask in the warm dry gold of the sand once more.

Come to me; you with the laughing face; in the gloom as I lie
Dreaming of days that are dead and of joys gone by;
Let us be boys together to-night and pretend as of old
We are pirates at rest in a cave among great heaps of gold.

Come; you shall be chief: we'll not quarrel: the time flies so fast:
There are ships to be grappled, there's blood to be shed, ere our playtime be past:
No; perhaps we *will* quarrel, just once, or it scarcely will seem
So like the old days that have flown from us both like a dream.

Still; you shall be chief in the end; and then we'll go home
To the hearth and the tea and the books that we loved: ah, but come,
Come to me, come through the dark and the slow-dropping rain;
Come, old friend, come from your grave and let us be playmates again.

SHERWOOD.

Sherwood in the twilight, is Robin Hood awake?
Grey and ghostly shadows are gliding through the brake;
Shadows of the dappled deer, dreaming of the morn,
Dreaming of a shadowy man that winds a shadowy horn.

Robin Hood is here again: all his merry thieves
Hear a ghostly bugle-note shivering through the leaves,
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Merry, merry England has kissed the lips of June:
All the wings of fairyland were here beneath the moon;
Like a flight of rose-leaves fluttering in a mist
Of opal and ruby and pearl and amethyst.

Merry, merry England is waking as of old,
With eyes of blither hazel and hair of brighter gold:
For Robin Hood is here again beneath the bursting spray
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Love is in the greenwood building him a house
Of wild rose and hawthorn and honeysuckle boughs:

Love is in the greenwood: dawn is in the skies;
And Marian is waiting with a glory in her eyes.

Hark! The dazzled laverock climbs the golden steep:
Marian is waiting: is Robin Hood asleep?
Round the fairy grass-rings frolic elf and fay,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Oberon, Oberon, rake away the gold,
Rake away the red leaves, roll away the mould,
Rake away the gold leaves, roll away the red,
And wake Will Scarlett from his leafy forest bed.

Friar Tuck and Little John are riding down together
With quarter-staff and drinking-can and grey goose feather;
The dead are coming back again; the years are rolled away
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

Softly over Sherwood the south wind blows;
All the heart of England hid in every rose
Hears across the greenwood the sunny whisper leap,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Hark, the voice of England wakes him as of old
And, shattering the silence with a cry of brighter gold,
Bugles in the greenwood echo from the steep,
Sherwood in the red dawn, is Robin Hood asleep?

Where the deer are gliding down the shadowy glen
All across the glades of fern he calls his merry men;
Doublets of the Lincoln green glancing through the May
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day;

Calls them and they answer: from aisles of oak and ash
Rings the *Follow!* *Follow!* and the boughs begin to crash;
The ferns begin to flutter and the flowers begin to fly;
And through the crimson dawning the robber band goes by.

Robin! *Robin!* *Robin!* All his merry thieves
Answer as the bugle-note shivers through the leaves:
Calling as he used to call, faint and far away,
In Sherwood, in Sherwood, about the break of day.

THE WORLD'S MAY-QUEEN.

I.

WHITHER away is the Spring to-day?
To England, to England!
In France they heard the South wind say,
"She's off on a quest for a Queen o' the May,
So she's over the hills and far away,
To England!"

And why did she fly with her golden feet
To England, to England?
In Italy, too, they heard the sweet
Roses whisper and flutter and beat—
"She's an old and a true true love to greet
In England!"

A moon ago there came a cry
From England, from England,
Faintly, fondly it faltered nigh
The throne of the Spring in the Southern sky,
And it whispered "Come," and the world went by,
And with one long loving blissful sigh
The Spring was away to England!

II.

When Spring comes back to England
And crowns her brows with May,
Round the merry moonlit world
She goes the greenwood way:
She throws a rose to Italy,
A fleur-de-lys to France;
But round her regal morris-ring
The seas of England dance.

When Spring comes back to England
And dons her robe of green,
There's many a nation garlanded
But England is the Queen;
She's Queen, she's Queen of all the world
Beneath the laughing sky,
For the nations go a-Maying
When they hear the New Year cry—

"Come over the water to England,
My old love; my new love;
Come over the water to England,
In showers of flowery rain;
Come over the water to England,
April, my true love;
And tell the heart of England
The Spring is here again!"

III.

So it's here, she is here with her eyes of blue
In England, in England!

With a glory of shimmering glimmering dew
And a heaven of quivering scent and hue
And a lily for me and a rose for you
In England.

There's many a wanderer far away
From England, from England,
Will toss upon his couch and say—
Though Spain is proud and France is gay,
And there's many a foot on the primrose way,
The world has never a Queen o' the May
But England.

IV.

When Drake went out to seek for gold
Across the uncharted sea,
And saw the Western skies unfold
Their veils of mystery;
To lure him through the fevered hours
As nigh to death he lay,
There floated o'er the foreign flowers
A breath of English May:

And back to Devon shores again
His dreaming spirit flew
Over the splendid Spanish Main
To haunts his childhood knew,
Whispering "God forgive the blind
Desire that bade me roam,
I've sailed around the world to find
The sweetest way to home."

V.

And it's whither away is the Spring to-day?
To England, to England!
In France you'll hear the South wind say,
"She's off on a quest for a Queen o' the May,
So she's over the hills and far away,
To England!"

She's flown with the swallows across the sea
To England, to England!
For there's many a land of the brave and free
But never a home o' the hawthorn-tree,
And never a Queen o' the May for me
But England!

She is here, she is here with her eyes of blue,
In England, in England!
She has brought us the rainbows with her, too,
And a heaven of quivering scent and hue,
And a glory of shimmering glimmering dew,
And a lily for me and a rose for you,
To England.

And round the fairy revels whirl
In England, in England!
And the buds outbreak and the leaves unfurl,
And where the crisp white cloudlets curl
The Dawn comes up like a primrose girl
With a crowd of flowers in a basket of pearl
For England!

A SONG OF ENGLAND.

THERE is a song of England that none shall ever sing;
So sweet it is and fleet it is
That none whose words are not as fleet as birds upon the wing,
And regal as her mountains,
And radiant as the fountains
Of rainbow-coloured sea-spray that every wave can fling
Against the cliffs of England, the sturdy cliffs of England,
Could more than seem to dream of it,
Or catch one flying gleam of it,
Above the seas of England that never cease to sing.

There is a song of England that only lovers know;
So rare it is and fair it is,
Oh, like a fairy rose it is upon a drift of snow,
So cold and sweet and sunny,
So full of hidden honey,
So like a flight of butterflies where rose and lily blow
Along the lanes of England, the leafy lanes of England;
When flowers are at their vespers
And full of little whispers,
The boys and girls of England shall sing it as they go.

There is a song of England that only love may sing,
So sure it is and pure it is;
And seaward with the sea-mew it spreads a whiter wing,
And with the sky-lark hovers
Above the tryst of lovers,
Above the kiss and whisper that led the lovely Spring
Through all the glades of England, the ferny glades of England,
Until the way enwound her
With sprays of May, and crowned her
With stars of frosty blossom in a merry morris-ring.

There is a song of England that haunts her hours of rest:
The calm of it and balm of it
Are breathed from every hedgerow that blushes to the West:
From the cottage doors that nightly
Cast their welcome out so brightly
On the lanes where laughing children are lifted and caressed
By the tenderest hands in England, hard and blistered hands of England:
And from the restful sighing
Of the sleepers that are lying
With the arms of God around them on the night's contented breast.

There is a song of England that wanders on the wind;
So sad it is and glad it is
That men who hear it madden and their eyes are wet and blind,
For the lowlands and the highlands
Of the unforgotten islands,
For the Islands of the Blesséd and the rest they cannot find
As they grope in dreams to England and the love they left in England;
Little feet that danced to meet them
And the lips that used to greet them,
And the watcher at the window in the home they left behind.

There is a song of England that thrills the beating blood
With burning cries and yearning
Tides of hidden aspiration hardly known or understood;
Aspirations of the creature
Towards the unity of Nature;
Sudden chivalries revealing whence the longing is renewed
In the men that live for England, live and love and die for England:
By the light of their desire
They shall blindly blunder higher,
To a wider, grander Kingdom and a deeper, nobler Good.

There is a song of England that only God can hear;
So gloriously victorious,
It soars above the choral stars that sing the Golden Year;
Till even the cloudy shadows
That wander o'er her meadows
In silent purple harmonies declare his glory there,
Along the hills of England, the billowy hills of England;
While heaven rolls and ranges
Through all the myriad changes
That mirror God in music to the mortal eye and ear.

There is a song of England that none shall ever sing;
So sweet it is and fleet it is
That none whose words are not as fleet as birds upon the wing,
And regal as her mountains,
And radiant as her fountains
Of rainbow-coloured sea-spray that every wave can fling
Against the cliffs of England, the sturdy cliffs of England,
Could more than seem to dream of it,
Or catch one flying gleam of it,
Above the seas of England that never cease to sing.

STATESMEN.

QUIETER than the sun is he
Whose task is mightier to perform,
And needs the primal majesty
Of strength that rules the storm.

The great prophetic heart is his,
The poet's power to bless and blend
Life with the cosmic harmonies
That roll to one great end.

Ah, yet not his to seek or roam
The undiscovered and sublime;
But how to bring his good ship home
Across the seas of Time.

His course must veer with every wind,
Yet is the swiftest and the best
His wisdom of the sea can find;
And God will add the rest.

The statesman looks not where the wave
Of momentary detail swirled;
His hope is deeper than the grave
And wider than the world.

His hands upon the wheel deny
The wild demands of circumstance;
His eyes are on the distant sky
Beyond the clouds of chance:

And when, still beating up the wind,
He slowly brings the Ship of State
Home, though the people chafe to find
How dark it is and late;

With all his tacking courses run
At last beyond the roaring sea,
Men find him faithful to the one
Haven where they would be.

Far other he whose words are free
To flatter weakness and conform;
And help a drunken crew to flee
Full sail before the storm;

He scans the rainbow in the wave
And dazzling spray around him hurled;
Their light will last him till his grave
Obliterates his world.

His hands upon the wheel reply
To every call of circumstance;
He chases down the reeling sky
The rushing clouds of chance.

He spreads before the boisterous wind
  The wild white wings of the Ship of State ;
While all the people cheer to find
  The sails crash and inflate.

Before the uproarious wind they run
  Out, out into the hungry sea ;
How fast ! And, when that day is done,
  How far, O God, from hope and Thee.

THE PHANTOM FLEET.

The sunset lingered in the pale green West:
In rosy wastes the low soft evening star
Woke; while the last white sea-mew sought for rest;
And tawny sails came stealing o'er the bar.

But, in the hillside cottage, through the panes
The light streamed like a thin far trumpet-call,
And quickened, as with quivering battle-stains,
The printed ships that decked the parlour wall.

From oaken frames old admirals looked down:
They saw the lonely slumberer at their feet:
They saw the paper, headed *Talk from Town;*
Our rusting trident, and our phantom fleet:

And from a neighbouring tavern surged a song
Of England laughing in the face of war,
With eyes unconquerably proud and strong,
And lips triumphant from her Trafalgar.

But he, the slumberer in that glimmering room,
Saw distant waters glide and heave and gleam;
Around him in the softly coloured gloom
The pictures clustered slowly to a dream.

He saw how England resting on her past,
Among the faded garlands of her dead,
Woke; for a whisper reached her heart at last,
And once again she raised her steel-clad head.

Her eyes were filled with sudden strange alarms;
She heard the westering waters change and chime;
She heard the distant tumult of her arms
Defeated, not by courage, but by Time.

Knowledge had made a deadlier pact with death:
Nor strength nor steel availed against that bond:
Slowly approached—and Britain held her breath—
The battle booming from the deeps beyond.

Ah! then what anguish rose upon the wind,
And hung, tortured, between the sea and sky,
Where all her navies, baffled, broken, blind,
Slunk backward, snarling in their agony!
Who guards the gates of Britain now? The cry
Stabbed heaven! *Ah, God, the shattered ramparts fall!*
And suddenly there pealed an answer: "*I*
Stand here for God and England!" Through the pall
Of cannon-smoke that voice burst like a trumpet-call.

Then came a distant sound of breaking waves
Rolling out of the sunset-coloured gloom;
A multitudinous rumour of rending graves,
And generations rising from their tomb:
With sound imperious as the dawn of doom

They bade the conqueror pause upon his way;
From coast to coast the cannon ceased to boom;
The heaving fleets in broken anguish lay,
Listening with such prayers as words can never pray.

I stand for God and England! The great East
Heard, and was rent asunder as a veil:
Host upon host out of the night increased
Its towering clouds and crowded zones of sail:
England, our England, canst thou faint or fail?
We come to fight for England yet once more!
This, this is ours at least! Count the great tale
Of all these dead that rise to guard thy shore
By right of the red life they never feared to pour.

We come to fight for England! On they came;
One cloud of conquest sweeping down to lee;
And there, through all their thousands, flashed like flame
The deathless signal of the Victory:
And there was Nelson, watching silently
His great ship rush before the stormy van,
And still his timeless watchword ruled the sea:
England expects this day that every man
Will do his duty: and still in front the Victory ran.

Nelson, our Nelson, frail and maimed and blind,
Stretched out his dead cold face against the foe:
And England's Raleigh followed hard behind,
With all his eager fighting heart aglow;
Glad, glad for England's sake once more to know
The old joy of battle and contempt of pain;
Glad, glad to die, if England willed it so,
The traitor's and the coward's death again;
But hurl the world back now as once he hurled back Spain.

And there were all those others, Drake and Blake,
Rodney and Howard, Byron, Collingwood;
With deathless eyes aflame for England's sake,
As on their ancient decks they proudly stood,—
Decks washed of old with England's purplest blood;
And there, once more, each rushing oaken side
Bared its dark-throated, thirsty, gleaming brood
Of cannon, watched by laughing lads who died
Long, long ago for England and her ancient pride.

We come to fight for England! The great sea
Before the rushing bows began to break
In roaring cataracts, as the Victory
Drew them in her inviolable wake:
With all their gleaming guns in deadly rake
And silent menace, towards the foe they passed,
Crying, O England, England, for our sake
Whose guns are dumb for ever, now at last
Behold us die once more, then let the past be past.

We come to die for England: through the hush
Of gathered nations rose that regal cry,
From naked oaken walls one word could crush
If those vast armoured throats dared to reply:
But there the most implacable enemy
Felt his eyes fill with gladder, prouder tears,
As Nelson's calm eternal face went by,
Gazing beyond all perishable fears
To some imperial end above the waste of years.

Through the deep hush the vision streamed away
Silently towards the smouldering crimson West,
And a strange peace covered the fleets that lay
Heaving upon the breathless ocean's breast.

Far, far away, the yearning voiceless nations
Saw the great Light that brings the end of wars
Guiding the dead and deathless generations,
Till love and awe and wonder brought the stars:

But ere the last faint colour ebbed in heaven
That ancient host returned to rest at last;
And voices cried across the empurpled even,
Reign, England, reign, and let the past be past.

Thy heritage is rich; and it is thine
By right of toil on every land and sea;
And by that crimson sacrificial wine
Of thine own heart and thine own agony.

Thy heritage is rich; but every hour
Demands the present labour: this alone
Preserves to thee that regal right and power
Whereof the past is but the cushioned throne.

Look to the fleet! Again and yet again
Hear us who storm thy heart with this one cry;
Hear us who cannot help, though fain and fain
To hold the breach before thee and to die.

Look to the fleet! thy fleet! the first, last line;
England, it is thy sword, thy strength, thy shield,
Thy food, thy life-blood! England, it is thine
Now, now, to hold the birthright or to yield.

England, what are thy dead to thee? God's Rose,
What are thy last year's petals to the breeze,
Unless thy spirit in dreaming of them knows
The eternal light that laps them round with peace?

Then, all night long, the imperious days of old
Swept back through misty zones of blood and tears,
And cloudy visions towards the darkness rolled
The sad returning pageant of the years.

Slowly, o'er tides where toil and tumult cease,
Through shadowy gulfs the Victory returned,
To harbour on the shores of perfect peace,
And from her mast no battle-message burned:

And, following her, there drew through phantom skies
The faded Temeraire with misty spars,
The black blur of the coughing tug, and cries
Of seamen looking eastward towards the stars.

Then host on host, from heaven's remotest bound,
In silence drew their zone of mystic light,
Each with a sovran stillness haloed round,
Majestically moving towards the night.

SILK O' THE KINE.

A TALE OF THE ISLES.

I.

Eilidh,[1] *Eilidh, Silk o' the Kine;*
Happy is he whose hand shall twine
Thy warm wild beauty of shadow and shine.

Like the glossy waves of a golden sea,
Eilidh, thy deep hair covers thee;
Oh, Eilidh, Eilidh, a deep, deep sea,
A golden sea,
A deep, deep sea.

II.

Heather-drowsy, heather-drowsy, lapped in the sunlight together,
Eilidh and Isla lay one day in the golden summer weather.
For the silken sea of her golden hair and its billows of shadow and shine
Had Sorch the Singer named her, Eilidh—Silk o' the Kine;

[1] *Eilidh,* pronounced *Isle-y.*

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And the laughing lovers were cradled in clouds of purple and gold,
As round their couch in the heather it rippled and glistened and rolled.
And the honey-sweet air was wild with the warble of birds and the whisper of rills;
And the wind blew soft and sweet with the scent of the bloom of a thousand hills;
And a myriad twinkling smiles awoke in the dreamy blue of the bay,
For, far and far above them, Eilidh and Isla lay;
And her hand lay warm in his clasping hand; two young lovers were they:
Two young lovers were they.

III.

Many a floating butterfly and yellow-banded bee,
Wondering and blundering across the blissful hours,
Paused o'er Eilidh's fragrant hair as it tumbled soft and free,
Dreaming and gleaming, a glossy golden sea
That rolled a happy kiss-deep among the heather-flowers.
Her eyes were deeper than the skies that arch the sunny South;
The gipsy sun had kissed her cheek and a rose had kissed her mouth;
Her breast was like a blossoming wave that curves in a sea of bliss,
As she leaned her golden head far back and turned her closing eyes
Brimmed with the joy of life and love to the cloudless azure skies,
And the rosy golden apple of her throat to his following kiss.
And she laughed the low sweet laugh of love and thought of the crimson fray
That raged on the soft blue waters beyond the dreaming bay;
She laughed the low sweet laugh of love that kept her lover bound
Safe to her breast as round his breast her white arms clung and wound.

She had prayed him and stayed him, with the sword at his side;
And her laugh had conquered all the calls of glory and pride:
For her own love and her true love she held him safely there;
It was only one away to them, but all the world to her.
She had pleaded; she would die with him; they were so young to die;
She had pleaded; she had conquered, with one last low broken cry:
So now she leaned her head far back with the perfect laugh of love;
And the blossoms murmured round her and the skies grew dim above:
Her arm was round her true love's neck and her hand was in his hand;
And her heart against his heart that day in the silent summer-land.
And the sun sank down to the waiting smiles that wrinkled the blue of the bay;
And a shadow covered the warm sweet hill where Eilidh and Isla lay;
But her hand lay warm in his clasping hand: two young lovers were they:
Two young lovers were they.

IV.

The sun sank down and the darkness covered the torn red ships,
As over the dark blue sea they ploughed triumphantly home;
And the warriors lay and panted with the battle-surf on their lips;
And the moon slunk out above them in a menacing cloud of eclipse;
And a mutter of distant thunder crept o'er the wandering foam.

Then the King stood up in the blood-stained prow of the *Raven* and said,
"*Who saved my life in the battle?* He shall take to-night for his own
The Flower of the island women, a maiden, a queen to his bed;
With a sword, if they will, between them; but he shall not lie alone.

Who saved my life in the battle?" And the warriors with one breath
Answered: "Cormic Achanna; he saved the life of the King!"
When he slipped in the bloody grapple and screamed at the feet of death
Achanna stood over the body and cleared a terrible ring,
Wheeling his battle-axe round him and shouting his own death-song;
For he deemed that fight was his last; but the red blood splashed in his face
And the laughing madness was on him: there was no hell so strong
As the joy of the last great battle to the gloom of his ancient race.

"*Who is the Flower of our women?*" And Sorch the Singer rose
And touched his harp and sang as the ships went over the sea:
"Every star in the deep dim skies and every wind that blows
Has heard the name of Eilidh and the song it made for me;
Oh, fair as the fairest rose on earth her flower-sweet face shall be,
This night of nights, oh star of the battle, this night of nights for thee;
This night of nights for thee."

v.

Eilidh, Eilidh, Silk o' the Kine,
Happy is he whose hand shall twine
Thy warm wild beauty of shadow and shine.

Eilidh, thy deep hair covers thee,
Like the glossy waves of a golden sea;
Oh, Eilidh, Eilidh, the sea is deep
That holds thy gold in its emerald keep.

This was the song that Sorch the Singer
Made one day as he saw her linger

Bathing in the dazzled sea
And looking backward wistfully
Over its infinite mystery;
With the cool white foam in the noonday heat
Murmuring sweetness over the sweet
Golden light of her golden feet,
And her deep hair shimmering down to her knee.

For once in the warm blue summer weather
He lay with his harp in the deep sweet heather,
And watched her white limbs glimmer and gleam
Out, far out, through the sea's eternal dream,
Swimming, with one bright arm like a wild sunbeam
Flashing and cleaving the warm wild emerald tide
That trembled and murmured and sobbed at her naked side,
And folded and moulded her beauty in sun-soft gold,
And swooned at her sweetness, and swiftly revived into cold
Clear currents of emerald rapture, again and again
Scattered a glory of kisses around her that broke into rainbows and rain,
As over and under her blossoming breasts they rippled and glistened and rolled.

VI.

Eilidh, Eilidh, Silk o' the Kine,
Happy is he whose hand shall twine
Thy glossy beauty of shadow and shine.

Eilidh, thy deep hair covers thee
Like the warm wild waves of a golden sea;
Oh, Eilidh, Eilidh, a deep, deep sea,
A golden sea,
A deep, deep sea.

The King stood up in the crimson glow that gloomed in the feasting hall,
"Achanna, to-night our island Rose, our Rose of the World is thine:"
And the smoky red of the rolling fire danced on the painted wall;
As she came through the midst of them, trembling, Eilidh, Silk o' the Kine:
She came—oh, white as a star when the moon is all in eclipse,
Through the broad-flung oak-rough limbs of the warriors waiting the feast,
With the blackening blood on their hands and a mutter of song on their lips,
And the hell still hot in their eyes, though the heavy panting had ceased.

And the King laughed out: "Oh, Eilidh, go to Achanna thy lord,
Gladden his heart with thy beauty, take his hand in thine own;
To-night if he will you shall lay between you a two-edged sword,
But when the drinking is over he shall not lie alone."

And she stared in the face of the King as if in a dream she had heard
The voice of Isla her lover vainly trying to speak;
And her red lips curved and struggled like the wings of a wounded bird,—
"Oh King, I am plighted," she whispered, and the rose awoke in her cheek.

"Plighted!" he answered her roughly, with a thunder-cloud on his brow,
For what was a maiden troth to him but a kiss of the flying hours?
"Plighted, Eilidh, Silk o' the Kine—by God! you are plighted now
By more than the babble of lovers asleep on a bank of flowers."

"Plighted," she answered slowly. "Oh King, my love is my own,
And none can take it from me, not life, nor death, nor doom;
I am plighted, oh King," her low voice broke in a slow deep moan,
"I am plighted, oh King, plighted, by the child that moves in my womb."

Then the King arose in his fury, and he saw that her girdle was wried,—
"By God! you shall die together or tell me your lover's name:
His child shall be born in your anguish and clutch at your writhen side;
Mother and child, you shall burn together, one torch in one shrieking flame.
Tell me the name of the man!" The King's voice rang through the hall;
Then all was hushed, and never a whisper broke through the gloom
From the hard red lips of Eilidh where she stood before them all,
Proud and peerless and silent, awaiting the word of doom.
"Tell me the name of the man!" and the great doors opened wide,
And through the sprawling limbs of the feasters a light foot sped;
And suddenly Eilidh laughed out loud, for Isla was there at her side,
And her hand lay warm in his clasping hand; and she lifted her beautiful head
High in the triumph of love that knows there is nothing to fear,
Now, in life or death, in earth or heaven or hell,
When the coil of the world is conquered and the very God draws near,
And touches the eyes of the soul with light, and whispers "All is well."
And all was well with Isla; for now in the world's despite
The ache of remorse was over, and all the glory and pride
Of the earthly battle had vanished in the dawn of the boundless night,
And he stood with his love in the shadow of death as a bridegroom with a bride.

Then all the crimson glow of the hall was hushed once more,
And Eilidh looked into Isla's face as they waited the word of death,
And only they heard, far off, on the desolate rock-bound shore,
The sea like a peaceful sleeper drawing a slow deep breath;
Till as a tiger snarls with his foot on the bleeding prey
Slowly the savage lips of the King curled back and hissed:
"To-night you are ready to die; but to-night you shall go your way,
And dream of the death that is ready to feed on the mouth you have kissed.
To-night you shall go to your lover and feed your love to the fill:
You shall play with his bleeding heart at dawn before he burns at the stake;
Then Gloom Achanna shall take you for a night or a moon, if he will;
Go!" and the hall was hushed once more till they heard the great sea break
Like a distant host of ransomed souls rushing away into peace,
Rushing away from the body of death in the last supreme release,
As Eilidh and Isla, hand in hand, passed through the silent hall,
Hand in hand through the gaping doors and into the starry light.
But Gloom Achanna envied Isla the love of that last brief night,
For he knew by the glory of Eilidh's eyes that love had conquered all.

VII.

Never a boat could leave that isle for its watchful midnight guard;
But, when with isles of rose and green the golden east was barred,
A trembling herdsman came to the King at the dreadful break of day,
And said that, passing the hut in the heather where Eilidh and Isla lay,

He thought to see them clasped and kissed in the waves of her golden hair,
But the door was wide to the wind and the sea; and only death was there.
For their couch of tawny fawn-skins was smoking wet and red;
And Gloom Achanna was huddled across it, haggard and warm and dead,
With the coverlet of the lovers for his reeking purple pall,
And the dagger of Eilidh deep in his heart, and the red sun over all.

Then Sorch the Singer came to the King as he stared in empty amaze
And said, "Oh King, as I watched the sun break through the first gold haze,
I saw those lovers pass to the shore, hand in clasping hand;
And they cast their raiment from them there on the golden sand;
And they waded up to their golden knees in the clear green waves, and there,
Clothed with the sun and the warm soft wind and Eilidh's golden hair,
Isla broke his sword and watched it heavily shimmering down
Through the lustrous emerald gleam to the sea-flower forests of dim deep brown.
And they kissed each other, once, on the mouth, and then, as I stood in the heather,
I saw them, Eilidh and Isla, they swam out in the sunlight together:
Out, far out, through the golden glory that dazzled the green of the bay:
Two strong swimmers were they, oh King, that swam out in the sunlight together;
Whether they went to life or death, two strong swimmers were they:
Two strong swimmers were they.

VIII.

Eilidh, Eilidh, Silk o' the Kine,
Happy is he whose hand shall twine
Thy warm wild beauty of shadow and shine.

Like the glossy waves of a golden sea,
Eilidh, thy deep hair covers thee:
Oh, Eilidh, Eilidh, a deep, deep sea,
A golden sea,
A deep, deep sea.

BLACKBERRIES.

Out of the sunny field they passed
And sought the leafy shade;
A farmer's boy with laughing lips,
A barefoot village maid.

Her lips were blue with blackberries,
Her finger-tips were red;
And "What shall take the stain away
This day at all?" she said.

He's pulled the rose from out his coat,
And it was fully blown;
He's heard the song the linnet sang,
And they were all alone.

It was a white rose took the stain
From her dainty finger-tips;
But, O, it was a redder flower
Grew purple at her lips.

THE LORDING'S DAUGHTER.

I.

It was a lording's daughter, the fairest one of three,
And O, she loved a sailor lad as well as well might be,
But he sailed away at Christmas-tide and the ship was lost at sea,
And bitterly she mourned him.

II.

As in the Spring she sat and wept beneath the budding spray,
Another lad that loved her well beside her sadly lay,
And took her hand between his own and kissed her tears away,
Who favoured not nor scorned him.

III.

But, as he kissed her, youth and nature softly blindly strove,
And to his lips without design her lips began to move;
Her eyes were brimming so with tears she took him for her love,
And softly, blindly kissed him.

IV.

Then every tear awoke a kiss and every kiss a tear;
Against his heart her heart was warmed, and all the sweet o' the year
Quickened the spirit through the blood; and since her love was there,
She could no more resist him.

V.

Love is eternal, so we sing: Ah, yet it is no shame
For Love to take another shape, another heart and name;
And as for that she lost, before another Christmas came,
I think she hardly missed him.

THE DEAD RIVAL.

THERE is no choosing now,
No hovering between honeyed flower and flower;
No garland to replace the ghostly wreath
That signs you to his buried bridal hour;
True to your own lost love, in life and death:
There is no choosing now.

The world was mine to choose
Once, and I dreamed this best gift was for me,
That I might also walk the heights with Love
And pass triumphant to Eternity,
With all the wings of heaven flaming above;
Since Time was mine to choose.

Your sorrow claimed me, dear;
And clasped our hearts and hands, but every night
A dead man glides between us in the gloom,
And Love that once aspired to the utmost height
Creeps like some guilty creature to a tomb
Where Time lies buried, dear.

Ah; you are not to blame;
You loved him; and you knew that he was dead;
And it seemed hard to walk alone through life,
Never to feel Love's arms around your head,
Never to hear a husband whisper "wife":
You, you are not to blame.

Was I not lonely, too?
True woman and true friend, if when you took
The love I offered in the dead love's place
You hardly dreamed that I should ever look
To find the old glory shining in your face;
Was I not lonely, too?

Too distant is too near;
He is not swayed by temporal loss or gain;
I bow beneath the burden of our life;
He died; but in my heart he lives again
A life that brooks no rivalry, no strife;
Too distant is too near.

The songs you sing are his,
The songs he loved; and in your wondering eyes
When the tired fingers leave the last low note
If I drew near I know I should surprise
Such quiet burning tears, and in your throat
A sob: your songs are his.

He comes to you in dreams;
Yes; I have watched and waited all these years
For one dead man to die; and now I know
He lives in all our laughter, all our tears,
And where the tides of darkness ebb and flow
He comes to you in dreams.

Love cannot strive with ghosts:
There are too many memories in the night;
Too many unforgotten little words
Of his own summoning when the first grey light
Wakens the drowsy note of nested birds:
Love cannot strive with ghosts.

You buried him in me:
The darkness round our bed is one in kind
With that which seals his eyes and fills his grave;
And so your souls meet, so your blind lips find
Between my lips, the dear dead kiss you crave;
You buried Love in me.

Death is your husband, dear:
Oh, in your sleep I feel you pressing close,
Close to my heart and dreaming it is his;
And when your sweet mouth turns its drowsy rose
To mine—his name breaks murmuring through the kiss.
Death is your husband, dear.

IN GREAT WATERS.

Murder will out; but this—this was my friend;
And so he keeps it darker than the grave.
Look at the great grey waves that swirl and sweep
And fly, hounded and hounding on for ever;
Just as my fancies, poor Tom's fancies, mad
Tom's fancies, ha, ha, ha, in a wild crowd
Crash through his brain, for ever and for ever.
Oh, yes, yes, yes; but then you know, far down
Beneath all that, in darkness and in silence,
Far down, far down, a secret of the sea
Lies grinning at the monstrous fish that flit
Like strange Satanic butterflies through hell
Or hideous thoughts across a madman's mind,
Or—no, no, no, my God! not that, not that!
Wild thoughts—they come and go and come again,
Goggling at that nightmare in the gloom,
Far down, far down, where no sound ever comes
And no man's eye can peer, far down, far down.
You would not think how softly it can smile,
That secret; how it waits and waits and waits,
Although he was my friend; yes, waits and grins,
Knowing the sea shall give up all her dead.
Oh; it is true—murder will out; or else

It sends the murderer mad, mad, mad; and all
The white stars dance in mockery over his head;
The mad stars dance and reel until he shrieks
The secret out to stop them. Oh; no, no;
You must not whisper what I tell you now
Even in a dead man's ear. A friend is all
I need; the wind is moaning for my sake;
Even the wind is kind to me to-night
It moans; ah no; you need not shrink away;
You need not fear me; you are not my friend.

But listen; you must listen; do not speak;
For I have almost caught the thread of it:
Ay; it was this, I think. You know, for years,
For fifteen years, we two, each winter, went
In our old half-decked boat—*The Queen o' Sheba*—
To fish for herring. We were partners; ay,
And friends. Only last year I think it was,
Jack, that's my partner—sat with me astern.
The friendly stars looked down on us and saw
The bellying of the patched old tawny sails,
The heap of herring splashed in a streaming mass
Of molten silver on the moonlit boards,
Jack puffing at his pipe in perfect peace,
And me just whittling at a lump of wood
Making the yacht I promised to bring home
For Jack's own youngster—ten years old that week;
There, there you see a proof what friends we were;
God knows that's why the knife was in my hand;
God knows, God knows: there's nothing more to say.

The mountains like great shadows lay asleep
Along the coast; and, low down, we could see

The little twinkling light of Jack's own home;
And we said nothing; but I knew his thoughts
Like mine could see her—bending o'er the fire,
With that sweet curve o' the cheek, those deep grey eyes,
The grave red lips, and the soft wave o' the hair,
Ruth, Ruth, Jack's wife. I am mad; but then I hear
The wind moan Ruth, love Ruth, my lost love Ruth,
Oh, Ruth, Ruth, Ruth, lost now for evermore.
Twelve years ago, I thought my heart would break,
When she—my only woman in the world—
Became Jack's wife; but she will never know
Now,—ah, ha! ha! ha! When Jack lived, by God!
I never dreamed of breathing it at all.
I was quite faithful to my friend and her;
But, ah! when he was dead and when I knew
She loved me, I went mad, I dared not sleep
For fear of dreams too terrible to breathe.
I strove, strove, strove to loathe her lovely face;
For, though you must not tell a soul on earth,
I say that—ah, ha! ha! How goes the song,—

Damned old sea-dogs, lying forgotten,
You shall your grey old mother enfold
With shell-grown cabins and hulks grown rotten
And weedy cables and green sea-mould;
And bars of bullion and Spanish gold;
And bleached white bones and . . . . .

I say just this, no more—murder will out!
Murder will out, my friend, murder will out!

Well, as you know, the knife was in my hand,
When suddenly, as it seemed to me, we passed

The line of a great Valley on the coast,
A ragged gorge of gloom amongst the hills;
And whether a wind swept through it and made us heel
Unawares over, I hardly know; but there
We lay nigh flat for a moment, and with the shock
The ballast shifted and a broadside wave
Struck us before we righted, and made us heel
A little further, and over the sinking gunwale
The whole sea scrambled in and filled us; then,
Down, down, down in a hideous whirl we went,
Down in a drowning roar of cataract gloom,
Down, down for ever; down, down into hell;
Down till the breast and eye-balls almost burst
For freedom from that agony; at last
The mad whirl sank into a ghastly peace
Loaded with cold dark death, far down, far down,
Where nobody could see us, far, far down
Under the sea, and with one frantic thrust
I struck my hands and face up, up to seek
The stars again; but there, there, even now
The memory of that moment shrieks aloud
With horror; something clasped me, held me down,
To stifle and struggle. Oh, my God, my God,
Some suffocating nightmare of the sea,
With human arms, had gripped me! Do you know
Who that was? No; no; no; there was no help;
I say there was no help: I could not save him;
For he was tangled in the cordage: Christ,
I say that Jack was trapped there; and his arms
Clung blindly to me as a child might cling
To its mother in the darkness; my soul screamed
For life, life; and my bursting eyeballs burned
Against the weight of waters; my teeth grinned

Upwards at God, and my hand held the knife;
And then the coward that sleeps in all of us
Woke like a beast and revelled. Could I help
What slept within me? Is there any man
Made as we are— Oh ay, poor mad Tom knows;
The village used to call me Doctor Tom
Because I read so many books,—a man
Made, body and blood, out of the buried past
Of all his forefathers in all the worlds
And all the years from all eternity,—
Is there a man I say can even dream
He knows what cravings, what wild instincts lurk
Within him, darkly as adders in a wood,
Ready to strike if some new chance arise
Beyond his use and custom? Chain him down,
Your saint, his lips against the quivering lips
Of one he loved; would law prevent the heart
Beating a little quicker even in death?
Leave them a little; will their virtue make
The contact less a kiss or freeze the cry
Of sex in either's blood? Before my God
I struggled first to free him; then to free
Myself, myself! I struggled and strove to unclench
His grip: I tore at him; my nails bent back
And bled, and still he gripped me bursting there
With agony; I smote the heft of the knife
Again, again, into his cold dumb face
And his grip tightened; then, I know not how,
But all the wild beasts in me suddenly hungered
And leapt for joy as I thrust and thrust the cold
Sharp steel in a savage sensual ecstasy
Again, again, into his quivering throat,
The throat that in some nightmare of the past

I had seen her kiss and kiss. I thrust it in
Again, again, and hacked those kisses out
And warmed my hands in blood until I felt
The grip relax and the dead face fall back
For ever; and I shot upward till I heard
The whole sea hissing in my ears, and gasped
My thanks to God under the ghastly moon.

You know the papers told how I was saved!
Saved! Is it all a great big jest of God's?
Ah, ha! ha! ha! Lumpety, tumpety, tum!
How does the song go? Ah, ha! ha! ha! ha!

Pig-tailed devils of cutlass and rum,
Fierce old faces with many a scar:
Are ye all gone home to your Kingdom Come,
Men that steered by the storm and the star?
From Porto Bello to Calabar
What wicked old songs you used to roar,
Sons and fathers of Trafalgar,
Where are the . . . . .

Ruth, Ruth, lost for evermore!
I've walked about the beaches on the watch
For you know what: there's not a cormorant
Or sea-gull looks for food more greedily
Than I have watched and waited day and night
In storm and calm for that; yes, night and day
For nigh a year; but Jack has never come;
They'll never find him now. One night I found
The little yacht that I was whittling out,
Cast up with other rubbish from the sea.

Both would have perished otherwise, you say,
I could not help it, could I? Oh; no doubt
You'd justify me! Now, just one poor word
Close in your ear, my friend,—*Why did they yelp*
And leap and whinny with joy? There, there's a pit
For argument, coal-black and bottomless.

Listen; the wind is moaning like a child;
Oh Ruth, Ruth, Ruth, lost, lost for ever now;
For I have murdered love, and God is love,
So God is dead for me: they that kill love
Kill God in their own hearts; and I, Ruth, Ruth,
I murdered love the night I killed my friend,
And I must burn in hell for evermore.

Hush! Hush! These are not tears; if they were tears
All might be well, and I should not go mad;
I am blinded; but no, no; they are not tears.

Indeed he was my friend. You know, down there,
It hardly seemed like murder in the dark;
No; no; no; no; not murder; for I say
In spite of all, he was my friend, my friend.

LESSONS.

"Your lessons will soon be over,"
The old priest smiling said
To the gay little lass of seven
As he stroked her fair gold head:
Your lessons will soon be over;
You, too, will be wise and know
The secrets of earth and heaven,
And close your books and go.

"Love's lesson will soon be over,"
The old folks smiled and said,
Though she wept at the first word spoken
As her bridal dawn blushed red:
"Love's lesson will soon be over,
You will find when the good dreams go
That hearts are not easily broken;
There is not much else to know."

"Time's lesson will soon be over,"
The wise world smiled and said
To the woman that knelt in sorrow
Beside her still white dead:

"Time's lesson will soon be over,
You, too, will be wise and know
That to-day must vanish to-morrow,
And love must come and go."

"Your lessons will soon be over,"
An old priest smiling said,
But the eyes of your childhood are wanted
For the last great page to be read:
Your heart must forget what is over,
The wealth that you gained must go
With the fruit of the wisdom you planted;
And then—there is little we know.

She has learnt it! The hour is over:
The last fond words are said:
And the cold night winds are creeping
Over her cold dark bed:
Ay! Now that all lessons are over
She has found in the grave below
Her love's good reason for sleeping—
There was nothing at all to know.

PASSING.

A show of things that seem,
  A sound of lips that lie,
Wearily as a dream
  The world is passing by;
In vain we strive and cry
  The Light of Life to see:
Oh, Truth that seemed so nigh,
  Hast thou forsaken me?

The light upon the stream
  Of years that sing and sigh;
The pale, the piteous beam
  Of stars and flowers that fly,
Delude the hand and eye;
  They pass; but what of thee?
Love, art *thou* crowned on high?
  Hast *thou* forsaken me?

In depths of mystic dream
  Beyond the yearning sky
The Glory and the Gleam
  Of faith and wonder die;

Yet hear my lonely cry,
  Dim Face upon the Tree!
Wilt *thou*, too, not reply?
  Hast *thou* forsaken me?

Oh, while the world goes by
  And all is merged in Thee,
My God, my Father, why
  Hast Thou forsaken me?

THE DEAD MAN SPEAKS.

On the night when that decadent dreamer died,
Two or three of the baser throng
That such a king must move among
Were gathered there at his bleak bed-side.
It was much too dark for their hearts to trace
The death that crept across his face;
And so they talked in their common tongue
To the end of their curious commonplace:
And they said that the world was very wide,
And wrong was right and right was wrong:
They said that heaven defended the strong;
And they chattered of Time and his trickling sands,
And the mystery no man understands,
And the various gods of various lands,
From Sekhet and Thoth to the Crucified.

And the decadent bowed his head on his hands
As if in a weary dream he had heard;
But he answered them never a word,
Till "This is love," they leered, "and this
The procreant earth's old lure of bliss;
And pleasant enough is a boy's first kiss

On a girl's warm cheek in the moon of May,—
A moon to remember a year and a day,—
And yet," they said, "and yet, ah me,
Love comes and goes like the constant rose
Or the fickle inconstant wind that blows
Over the roses from sea to sea.

"Ask our Master," they cried; "he knows:
Has he not wandered from flower to flower,
And nourished his heart on the rose of an hour
Like a golden-girdled honey-bee?
Does he bid Love dream of Eternity?
Ah, no, no; not he; not he,
His blood is not cold: his heart is not dead,
And he lets Love follow the lips that are red.
Is it not so, dear friend?" they said.
Then he lifted his head.

His face was white with death in the gloom, but his hearers could not see;
"Listen," he said, "I know not why, but now in this hour I know
Not all the years I have lived on earth are worth that hour to me
When I breathed her name and saw her face in the sunlight, long ago.

I had only caught one fleeting glimpse as the April hours went by;
I had touched her hand and heard her voice in the dawn and the dream was gone;
But I shall remember the cry of my heart as it felt that her feet drew nigh,
When the dust of my body is mixed with the dust and sealed with the cold grey stone.

I have been true to her all these years: if I slept on another breast,
If other arms have lulled my dreams in the lotus-blossomed shrine,
They were hers when I woke in the pitiful dark and attained to the promised rest,
And there on the lips of a lost delight I have met her kiss with mine.

If God should send me an angel down and bid me choose, this night,
Never to see her face again, but straightway win His heaven;
Or catch one glimpse of her radiant eyes and then with blinded sight
Plunge to the nethermost fires of hell and burn there unforgiven;

Though every tortured soul in the dark that saw me so accursed
Should shudder away in utter fear of the taint of my unknown sin,
I would welcome every throe and pang as a castaway dying of thirst
Opens his blackened mouth to the rain and draws the rare drops in."

THE DIVINE LOVER.

Your eyes are bright;
  But not for that I love you:
Your lips are red;
  But what is that to me?
There is no light
  In all the skies above you
So softly shed
  As the dear light that tenderly
Hallows your still bent head;
  Yet not for that I love you.

Your tears are bright,
  Oh love, for that I love you;
Your wounds are red,
  And that is all to me!
Dark is the night
  Around you and above you;
Oh, hands and feet that bled,
  Oh, heart that ached with agony,
Oh, weary, wounded head,
  For this, for this, I love you;
Come unto me!
  Come unto me, O love, come unto me!

THE WOMAN-SOUL.

They stood before the fiery Gate,
With hearts and lips afire,
To triumph over fear and fate
For the dream of his desire;
"O love," he said, and bowed his head
To meet her sacred kiss,
"This is the hour that crowns us, earth
And heaven were made for this."

And she looked up into his face,
And found her true love there:
It was the parting of the ways,
Unless her soul could dare
Enter the dreadful doors where none
May draw this quickening breath
Or drink the glory of the sun
But Love and Sin and Death.

Enter the dreadful doors and meet
The mockery and the shame
That wrap the soul from head to feet
In a winding-sheet of flame!

Yet in her eyes he saw his own
Undimmed by doubt or sin:
"To save my soul," she heard him moan,
"We two must enter in."

Enter the dreadful doors and dream
The world well lost for love;
Would not the choral angels gleam
Around, beneath, above?
Her blinded eyelids closed; her head
Bent back beneath his kiss:
"If love is on my side," she said,
"I need no more than this.

"Enter, and I will follow; lead;
I know thy great heart well;
A heart to beat with mine and bleed
With mine in heaven or hell;
Enter;" and lo, his whitening face
Looked down, "Nay, love, but thou
Lead me and save me of thy grace,
Or sin will slay me now.

"Upward and on the woman-soul
Shall lead this baser clay,
Subdue and kindle and control" . . .
"Yes; I will lead the way;
You know not why your strength is fled,
And I so glad of this!
My true love hath my heart," she said,
"But I—oh, I have his.

"Look—follow me—for I will lead;
I bear thy great heart well,
A heart to beat with mine and bleed
With mine in heaven or hell,"
And through the Gate that, gaunt and black,
Swung open with a groan,
Smiling, she passed; the man shrunk back;
She entered in—alone.

A WOMAN'S WAY.

Ah, come back, come back to me, now Love lies bleeding,
You that struck him to the heart, come back and bid him live;
You that stabbed him to the quick, come back and hear him pleading;
Hear the wronged one pleading with the wronger to forgive.

Fools have found so many ways for souls to soar to heaven,
Men have found the highest height so easy to attain:
Yes; but here's a woman's soul will sink to seek the riven
Soul that lies and mocks her in the place of endless pain.

What if all the ways that sought the heights were growing steeper,
Love had wings and spurned the ground,—but, you that sinned and fell
So deep into the abyss, ah, see, her love can sink still deeper;
You that cannot come to her, she comes to you in hell.

See, the golden head is low that God so gently moulded,
Moulded for the morning when He saw that all was good;
See, her hands are groping for the hand they once enfolded,
Groping in the dust it stained with Love's unstinted blood.

Ah, come back, come back to me, now Love lies bleeding,
You that struck him to the heart, come back and bid him live;
You that stabbed him to the quick, come back and hear him pleading,
Hear the wronged one pleading with the wronger to forgive.

WINNIE AND DAFF.

Winnie and Daff were making hay.

Was it far away? Was it long ago?
For she sits by the fire, and it's sinking low,
And voices are calling her far away;
She is old and grey, but the whole world seems
Wavering back through a mist of dreams.

Daff and Winnie were making hay:

Winnie drowsed on a warm soft bed
With her smooth brown arms behind her head:
A lazy young kitten she was that day!
And she made poor Daff do all the work,
And she laughed as he did it and called him a Turk;

For Winnie and Daff were making hay.

And bold young Daff grew shy as a maid:
He'd a down on his lip like the dawning shade
Of a kiss; but he'd nothing at all to say;
And Winnie dreamed and forgot to laugh
As she drowsed in the sun and blinked at Daff.

For Daff and Winnie were making hay.

At last he thought she was fast asleep
And tiptoed quietly near to peep:
  Oh, her neck-kerchief beside her lay!
He came behind her and looking down
Caught one glimpse of her breast's ripe brown.

Winnie and Daff were making hay.

Then Winnie woke: for she dreamed that her mouth
Was suddenly touched by a breath from the South:
  And over her neck it seemed to stray;
So she boxed Daff's ears, and he couldn't complain;
For he took his revenge and kissed her again.

Daff and Winnie were making hay.

"One more, Winnie!" and "Look, Daff, no!
Somebody's coming! Do let me go!"

—Was it long ago? Was it far away?—
For the room is lit with a low soft light,
As she sits by the dying fire to-night.—

Winnie and Daff were making hay!

Ah, Daff and Winnie, make haste; one kiss!
Somebody coming? Indeed there is!
  Daff is dead and Winnie is grey!
But she sits by the fire to-night and it seems
The years roll back for her dim old dreams.

Hush! Daff and Winnie are making hay.

THE OLD SCEPTIC.

I AM weary of disbelieving: why should I wound my love
To pleasure a sophist's pride in a graven image of truth?
I will go back to my home, with the clouds and the stars above,
And the heaven I used to know, and the God of my buried youth.

I will go back to the home where of old in my boyish pride
I pierced my father's heart with a murmur of unbelief;
He only looked in my face as I spoke, but his mute eyes cried
Night after night in my dreams; and he died in grief, in grief.

Oh, yes; I have read the books, the books that we write ourselves,
Extolling our love of an abstract truth and our pride of debate:
I will go back to the love of the cotter who sings as he delves,
To that childish infinite love and the God above fact and date.

To that ignorant infinite God who colours the meaningless flowers,
To that lawless infinite Poet who matches the law with the crime;
To the weaver who covers the world with a garment of wonderful hours,
And holds in His hand like threads the tales and the truths of time.

Is the faith of the cotter so simple and narrow as this? Ah, well,
It is hardly so narrow as yours who daub and plaster with dyes
The shining mirrors of heaven, the shadowy mirrors of hell,
And blot out the dark deep vision, if it seemed to be framed with lies.

No faith I hurl against you, no fact to freeze your sneers;
Only the doubt you taught me to weld in the fires of youth
Leaps to my hand like the flaming sword of nineteen hundred years,
The sword of the high God's answer, *O Pilate, what is truth?*

Your laughter has killed more hearts than ever were pierced with swords,
Ever you daub new mirrors and turn the old to the wall;
And more than blood is lost in the weary battle of words;
For creeds are many; but God is One, and contains them all.

Ah, why should we strive or cry? Surely the end is close!
Hold by your little truths: deem your triumph complete!
But nothing is true or false in the infinite heart of the rose;
And the earth is a little dust that clings to our travelling feet.

I will go back to my home and look at the wayside flowers,
And hear from the wayside cabins the sweet old hymns again,
Where Christ holds out His arms in the quiet evening hours,
And the light of the chapel porches broods on the peaceful lane.

And there I shall hear men praying the deep old foolish prayers,
And there I shall see, once more, the fond old faith confessed,
And the strange old light on their faces who hear as a blind man hears,—
Come unto Me, ye weary, and I will give you rest.

I will go back and believe in the deep old foolish tales,
And pray the sweet old prayers that I learned at my mother's knee,
Where the Sabbath tolls its peace thro' the breathless mountain-vales,
And the sunset's evening hymn hallows the listening sea.

THE GRANDFATHER.

"*When you are dead*," murmured the little one,
And wondered why those grave old eyes grew dim
Above her laughing face; "*when you are dead*,"
She whispered, drawing down his old grey head
And kissing him,
"Then I shall take your chair into the sun;
And sometimes dream like you; and sometimes look
At pictures in some sweet old fairy-book."

"*When I am dead*," he said; and wondered why
Her constant eyes were still so calmly pure:
"Yes; when the white-thorn blows, I think I know
One silent way that you will sometimes go;
Ah, then be sure
As under that unclouded summer sky
You wander past my grave, or whisper there
Some happy news, be sure that I shall hear:

"Hear and be glad! And you must not be vexed
If I am very silent; you will seek
That silence: you may need it, some day, dear;
Come with your April dreams; and ah, though there
I cannot speak,

Come to me if you ever grow perplexed;
Come to me with your sorrow and your pain
And you shall go back comforted again."

"Sometimes," she said, "I think I shall forget,
And call you from the garden if I see
A face behind your window, and the roses
Dropping their petals round it as it closes.
How shadowy
They make it: I have seen the leaves quite wet
And splashing it at dawn with silvery dew,
When the birds come to swing and sing to you.

"And then," she whispered, "all the world will seem
Just like a fairy-tale: it will be strange
Never to see you: strange to see the hill
Covered with scented apple-blossom still!
Will it not change,
Change and grow old while you lie there and dream,
And hear my strange new voices call your name?
But year by year, you will be still the same."

"Yes; little one; I shall be still the same.
Time rushes onward in one mighty stream;
But in that place earth's unforgotten hours
Murmur together, like unfading flowers
In fields of dream,
Beneath one sky that folds with one sweet name,
The love ear hath not heard, eye hath not seen,
The buried past and all that might have been.

"Ah, little one, those unforgotten hours,
Hours that were wasted, hours that were not born,
The sudden generosities: the long
Monotony of self; and all the strong
Pangs of self-scorn,
The sleepy pleasures crowned with crimson flowers,
The sleepless faith that would not be denied,
The love that never wandered from my side.

"And there they wear that distant heavenly light
Which makes it more than pain to lose them now:
There I shall find them: there your voice will come
Through the dim meadows, crying for the home
We used to know;
Oh, I shall hear you in the lonely night;
And you will know I hear; and in your pain
My voice shall bring your home to you again."

She heard and did not hear, the little one:
Only she wondered why his eyes grew dim
Above her laughing face: "*When you are dead,*"
She whispered, drawing down his old grey head
And kissing him,
"*Then I shall take your chair into the sun;*
And sometimes dream like you; and sometimes look
At pictures in some sweet old fairy-book."

THE DEATH OF CHOPIN.

SING to me! Ah, remember how
Poor Heine here in Paris leant
Watching me play at the fall of day
And following where the music went
Till that old cloud upon his brow
Was almost smoothed away.

"Do roses in the moonlight flame
Like this and this?" he said and smiled;
Then bent and hearkened till the dark
Swelled with the silent sob a child
Might utter o'er some dead friend's name:
And this was Heine—mark!

You know I never cared to play
In public. What Bohemian nights
We passed down there for that brief year
When art revealed her last delights;
And I—my God, that night in May
When Hugo came to hear!

"Do roses in the moonlight glow
Like this and this?" I could not see
His eyes, and yet—they were quite wet,
Blinded, I think! What should I be
If in that hour I did not know
The gleam of God's regret?

For God has made this world of ours
  Out of his own exceeding pain,
As here in art man's bleeding heart
  Slow drop by drop completes the strain;
And dreams of death make sweet the flowers
  Where lovers meet to part.

Recall, recall my little room
  Where all the masters came that night,
Came just to hear me, Meyerbeer,
  Lamartine, Balzac; and no light
But my two candles in the gloom;
  Though she, she too was there!

George Sand; this music once unlocked
  My heart, she took the gold she prized:
Her novel gleams no richer: dreams
  Like mine are best unanalysed:
And she forgets her poor bemocked
  Prince Karol, now, it seems.

I was Prince Karol; yes, and Liszt
  Count Salvator Albani: she
My Floriani—all so far
  Away!—My dreams are like the sea
That round Majorca sighed and kissed
  Each softly mirrored star.

Oh, what a golden round of hours
  Our island villa knew: we two
Alone with sky and sea, the sigh
  Of waves, the warm unfathomed blue;
With what a chain of nights like flowers
  We bound Love, she and I.

What music, what harmonious
Glad triumphs of the world's desire
Where passion yearns to God and burns
Earth's dross out with its own pure fire,
Or tolls like some sweet angelus
Through Death's divine nocturnes.

"Do roses in the moonlight glow
Like this and this?" What did she think
Of him whose hands at Love's command
Made Life as honey o'er the brink
Of Death drip slow and sweet and slow?
Ah, did she understand?

She studied every sob she heard,
She watched each dying hope she found;
And yet she understood not one
Poor sorrow there that like a wound
Gaped, bleeding, pleading—for one word—
No? And the dream was done.

For her—I am "wrapped in incense gloom,
In drifting clouds and golden light;"
Once I was shod with fire and trod
Beethoven's path through storm and night:
It is too late now to resume
My monologue with God.

Well, my lost love, you were so kind
In those old days: ah yes; you came
When I was ill! In dreams you still
Will come? (Do roses always flame
By moonlight, thus?) I, too, grow blind
With wondering if she will.

Yet, Floriani, what am I
To you, though love was life to me?
My life consumed like some perfumed
Pale altar-flame beside the sea:
You stood and smiled and watched it die;
You, you whom it illumed,

Could you not feed it with your love?
Am I not starving here and now?
Sing, sing! I'd miss no smile or kiss—
No roses in Majorca glow
Like this and this—so death may prove
Best—ah, how sweet life is.

IN VANITY FAIR.

Dreamers, have you dreamed so far—"a common folk you walk among?"
Ay; you laugh and weep, then, with them, "speak dull things in their own tongue,"
Kneel before their baser idols, worship at their lower shrine,
Cherishing within your hearts a heaven so much much more divine?

Yea; may such as these not enter? These! Last night I saw a child
Crown itself with gilt and tinsel; and the Christ of children smiled
There from two blue heavens upon me. Oh, the gods that sit apart
Surely weep sometimes to see how small a thing may fill the heart;

Weep; but not in idiot sorrow, holding their great souls aloof,
Else would all the stars of heaven make merry o'er their palace roof,
Dance and shout again for laughter round a sight so strangely wise,
While the Christ-child led his children to their kingdom in the skies.

Here where rosy breasts and satin shimmer through the jewelled glare,
Here where London, painted, powdered, drinks the scandal-scented air,
Where they praise the new musician, where each fluttering heart and fan
Vows his heaven and hell delightful—like himself—a charming man,

Though they weasel all his clouds and fool him to his utmost bent,
Though his eyes behind the mask see only God's great firmament
Rolling round their midget world, oh fool, thrice fool, if he should see
Less to love than these have found who dance upon Eternity;

Each a queen in her own country, each a king in his own land,
Exiles here and slaves to all that know them not nor understand
How the heart within their heart is regal still and still must claim
Heaven's right absolute to love their bondage to a children's game.

Paltry, common, foolish, empty, tinselled; yet, oh tried and true
Child of God, shall these not enter? Look, are these not children, too?
Seek no more the unknown limit: Love stands knocking at thy door:
Souls that stoop attain to Godhead sooner than the souls that soar.

A NIGHT AT ST HELENA.

"It wants three hours to midnight. Do you hear
The sentries drawing closer? At this time
A ghost could scarce evade their vigilance:
I am so precious! Why, no ship can pass
This island, even twenty leagues away,
Without discovery from some signal-post;
Whereat one of your pleasant ships of war
That cruise and crouch around me day and night
Immediately sets out and shadows her
To what is deemed a safer distance. Now,
Would it not seem much easier if you dropped
A little poison in my medicine, doctor?
Or do you take me for the Devil, eh?
You see those floating guards are not enough;
But, after sunset, every fishing boat
Is under watch and ward; and there will stand
Two sentries at each entrance of my house;
A subaltern's guard six hundred paces off;
A cordon of picquets round the limits, too;
A picquet at every possible landing-place;
And shadowy sentinels upon the cliffs
At quite impossible exits; for you know
That I am somewhat bulky nowadays;

Why, they have even placed a sentinel
On every goat-path leading to the sea!

This is the kind of dream that harasses
One's nerves, and gives one cancer in the stomach.

I hardly think that you can help me much
Now; you had better leave me. I may sleep.
Good night."

And the physician sadly left
The doomed Napoleon, lying with clenched hands,
Pallid and still upon his bleak white couch
Like some great sculptured king upon a tomb.
But all night long the charge and recoil of thought
Beneath that aching marble brow denied
Sleep to the dark indomitable soul.
All night behind the quiet sullen face,
Through which as through a clay-cold mask of death
Gazed the unconquered proud eternal eyes,
Vain memory maddening into hopeless hope
Fought all his battles over once again,
With all he might have done, the great man's last
Inheritance of helpless power. No sound
Escaped the hard relentless chiselled lips.
His heart was far too far away for words
Of grief or scorn to bring its passion back
To that chill chamber of death; yet, as it chanced,
First in the dawn of dreams a careless cloud
Of trivial recollection lightly rose,
And almost made him smile, as a spoilt child
Smiles in remembrance of some angry spite
Done to a wooden puppet's battered face.

"Sir Hudson Lowe," began the silent voice
That threshed his bitter dreams out all night long,
"Sir Hudson Lowe, who is Sir Hudson Lowe?
Ah, yes, the poor apologetic man
Who thinks that he annoys me, or that I
Am much incensed with him; well, we must wear
A name for our vexation, let it be
Sir Hudson Lowe, the name is well enough.
I am incensed with you, Sir Hudson Lowe;
Well, no; I do not need apologies;
I am so insolent, you think; but you
Will need apologies when you are dead,
And bald professors pick your bones in grim
Historical research, Sir Hudson Lowe.
Yes; they will be so angry, they will come
Some to defend you, some to bid you stand
On your defence, for nothing more than this—
That I was much perturbed and never liked
Your name at all: indeed, I almost fear
That I have crumpled it up as I might crumple
A scrap of paper at Austerlitz, and quite
Unconsciously; ah me, Sir Hudson Lowe,
Will you disturb your country in your grave?
My God, I think that all I need is rest;
The rest these doctors cannot give me; rest;
An hour or so of sleep; I cannot sleep.

The sea sobs round the island! What a night!
And through the darker night within me now
The wandering seas of memory rise and cry:
And there is nought, within me or without,
But flying clouds and ghostly waves that rise
In wailing crowds out of the deep sea-gloom,

And toss their wild white arms and fling themselves
Prone on the pitiless reefs and shudder back
Shrivelling into the deep sea-gloom and rise
And toss their arms and wail and fling themselves
Down on the reefs once more for leagues and leagues
Of bitter broken coast and wet black night.
My hopes are cast upon the shoals of time
Like driftwood; like poor painted figure-heads
That once were pointed to a crimson East
Of unimagined Empires; and are now
Relics of splendid wrecks, tossed in the pools
Of yellow spume among the barren rocks.

I must not think: God, do not let me think:
I came so near: I should go mad with thought:
God, do not let me think: I must not think.

See; I am like a little child to-night!
I know how vain such thoughts are; yet I think;
Even as a child who wanders down a street
And touches every door-post as he goes,
If at the end he should remember one
That he has missed, thinks and is gnawed with mute
Sense of defeat, till he returns at last,
Begins from the beginning once again
And touches all. Victory, oh my God,
I also came so near that I could see
Its emptiness; but what if in this hour
I also am become as one of these;
A little child, Father, a little child?

Ah no; I must not think! Sleep, sleep, oh sleep,

Come down; let me forget a little while;
Come down; confuse and muffle me with dreams.
Now let the old hopes and fears and schemes of state,
The policies and purposes of war,
The plans and charts and lying bulletins,
The flying marches and the subtle flights,
The plumed and hissing hurricane of the charge
And all the red roar of the hidden guns
Mix with the mere mortality that dreams
Of human suffering in the unburied past;
The passions and ambitions and desires
That ride like waves in furious regiments;
The glory and the cruelty and the love
That clamour with the legions of the storm;
Now let them mix with this wide hungry sea
Of hopeless memory, weltering in the dark;
Though all beneath the gracious influence
Of sleep must seem so pitiful; helpless, too,
Within its human prison. The sea sobs
Hopeless and helpless, wide and blind as fate,
And darkly swayed and swung, hither and thither
In terrible impotent agony, seeking still
The meaning of its own intense desire
So vainly and for ever. What a night!

There was a meaning once! It seemed as near
As the sky seems to children. Yet, I think
It could not be so near: youth is too young
To feel the worth of the glory that it wears,
The splendour of the unattainable height,
The light that shines upon the unknown way,
The chivalry, the beauty, and the truth,
Which none can see till afterwards; and you

Still come in dreams, Ninette, still come in dreams,
Across that cherry orchard in the dawn—
My God, how red the dawn is, red as blood!—
And yet you trip so lightly down the path,
You trip so lightly down the path, Ninette,
To meet the little sunburnt lad you knew.

I wonder if you still remember this,
And how from the low ladder, with one hand
Upon his happy shoulder, you leaned down
With that red cherry parting your red lips
And kissed it softly and sweetly through his own
Red parting lips, until the four lips met.

Ninette, Ninette, remember the Old Guard
Before you kiss me. Ah, no, no; defeat
May pass; but you will come again, Ninette;
Do not forget the little lad you loved.
The sea sobs! How the sea sobs! Let it pass.

Ah, yes; there was a meaning. Once, it seemed
To elude me by a hair's breadth as I searched
Through volume after volume by the light
Of guttering candles in the garret there
At Paris, ere the barricadoed streets
Ran red and ere the crash of the Bastille
Shook Europe and my soul and bid them wake;
And the great crimson furnace that was France
Kept all the world at bay, just as a fire
Lit in a forest camp with none to guard
Keeps all the ravenous eyes of the wild beasts
Back, burning in the gloom of utter doubt:
And once I seemed to approach it as men heard

Beyond the nightmares of the expectant world
That sea of sick white faces whispering death;
And then along the stunned and blinded streets
The roar that rolled with Danton to his doom.

Ninette, Ninette, remember the Old Guard.

I think that he is most a king whose mind
Is likest God's in power and in desire
Both to create and order; and this thought
Seemed like a clue in those old days. My God,
The secret, the great secret, seemed so near
When with a gay young friend of mine I ran
To see the mob insult the king's own courts,
A rabble of some six thousand wretched swine
Possessed with evil spirits; we saw them there
Swarming in dirt and ugliness through all
The gates and corridors until at last
They found the king; and oh, my friend and I,
We saw him, the poor royal nincompoop,
Louis the Weakling, Louis the Locksmith, there,
Having a red cap clapped upon his brows,
Pushed to a window by their dirty hands
And made to bow and scrape and twiddle thumbs
And smile and smirk until the crew below
Was graciously inclined to belch a jest
In answer. Oh, I knew what I would do:
And afterwards the secret seemed my own
When I, too, stood above that seething mob
With the divine sense of the supreme power
Of death and judgment, till the moment came;
And as I stood there in the palace gates
My lips had but to move, once, with one word,

Fire! And the sudden apocalypse of my guns
Beginning their evangel to the world
Had hurled the chaos back into the gloom.

And you; oh, poor pale face of Josephine,
Why do you come to mock me with your tears?
Ah, smile, smile at me; do not weep; I'll bear
Everything, but not that! Do you hear me? Hate,
Mockery,—do you hear me?—everything;
But not those tears. I cannot bear your love;
No; nor your pity; let both die, I say!
Will Love not die, my God, will Love not die?

Ah yes; God knows; for we are parting now;
And I can strangle it. Can a woman kill
The child she suckled, the child whose little feet
She warmed against her heart, whose little fingers
Clung softly round her breasts imprinting them
With blind dimpled caresses, and whose body
Grew like a blossom crumpled for the bliss
Of little laughs and kisses; can she kill
Her child, I say; and I not kill my love?
Oh, you may plead and plead and plead and plead;
But you shall never move me: I must go
Upward and onward now: I loved you once:
God knows I loved you once; but Love can die;
And here see I kill Love for purposes
Of state. Oh, Love turns up a ghastly face
When he lies dying; and he lingers, lingers;
And I must crush him underfoot and yet
His life seems rooted in an evil dream
That lives for ever; though I burst his heart
And trample it underfoot he lingers and clings

And each of all his pangs is mine, mine, mine!
Oh God, will Love not die, will Love not die?

But they are wiser than they know who say
To fight with ghosts is but to wound the wind;
For the sword passes through them and they laugh!
I might as easily trample down the sea!
The sea sobs; how the sea sobs; what a night!
Oh now, I see us as we stood that day,
At parting, face to face; I hear you crying
On God and Love and begging me to take
You in my arms, you that I loved so, you
Pleading with me; for we are parting now
For ever; ah, to take you in my arms
Against my heart once, for the last, last time;
To feel your mouth crushed on my mouth again
For one swift moment, while we both forgot
That when the moment ended all must end.

Love, love, you plead with such a tortured face;
But mine, I see, is calm as marble still.

You should have known I loved you, oh my queen,
You must have known I loved you! Christ, what tears!

Peace! Peace! You knew it from the very first,
Or should have known it, had your eyes the power
To bear the light, or had your heart been true
As I now swear before the face of God
My heart was true to you: we might have risen
Above this world of battles then; but now
I rise alone: it is too late for love;
But, ere I go, remember I have loved

You only; loved you with what heart I had;
And I could stand before the eternal throne
And boast—my heart is great as any man's.
But you could never love. I did not ask
Love from a heart like yours. Had you been true
No more, but only true—oh, I am cruel,
And shall be crueller yet—I should not thus
Cast you aside as I cast off a cloak
To don the purple. Ah, my queen, you thought
That I was blind; and you must think me blind,
Blind, blind and hard as brutal nature now,
Blind as I seemed, once, wrapt in my vague dreams,
Dreams vague as the horizons of the world.
Ah, could you dream they ringed no seas, no shores,
No cities? No; not even a little hut
For Love to hide his head in? All was blank.
I tell you that before ten years have passed
All Europe shall be crouching like a hound
Before this blind man's feet. You poor blind eyes
That I have loved so long and kissed so often,
I love you still and kiss you for the last
Last time; but all the love I had to give
I keep henceforward as a flaming sword
In my own heart. No scruple, no remorse,
Can check my course at any wayside plea:
The end, the end is all. I never cared
If those whose sight was barred by walls and roofs,
Gossipers in the streets, could fail to see
My hope on the horizon; but you stood
With all those chatterers; and you think me blind
Because I see my battle rising black
As thunder in the distance, and I pass
Unheeding all the things that claim your eyes

To my own kingdom. Now let those that cross
My path take heed; for when I come alone,
The forces of the world are on my side,
The pitiless powers that feed the sun with fire,
Direct the wheeling planets and control
The invincible countermarching of the stars:
And it shall seem, to those that hear my battle
Rolling afar the great psalm of my guns,
As if the old energies of time and space
From chaos recreated and reformed
To my own order and new purposes
Were passing o'er the borders of this earth,
Chanting, like pilgrims on a pilgrimage
Through the deep gloom of sorrow and sin and death,
The dark funereal progress of the world
To the vast triumphs of Eternity;
A chant that sounds as if the seas of doom
Were slowly breaking on an iron shore
Remote and inappellable as God.
Nations shall call me Christ and Anti-Christ;
And in all ages to the end of years
My spirit shall brood upon the seas of war;
And in the dawn of battle, when great kings
Take council, they shall think and dream of me
And speak my name with bated breath; nor dare
To call me their exemplar; lest the world
Should mock their mad assumption of my throne;
And when another conqueror comes and goes
His fame shall be a jewel in my crown;
His sword shall only serve to write my name
More deeply in the memory of mankind.
It is engraved upon the Pyramids
To which I pointed on that golden day

In Egypt. There, before the silent army
I rode and said, "My soldiers, forty ages
Look down upon you." Why, I saw men weep,
Great bearded men; and I have heard my name
"The little Corporal," sobbed out as they died
From throats that choked with love and blood and love
And, though I never loved these men at all,—
Yet I shall be remembered when the God
Of battles is forgotten.
Poor pale face,
Upturned to that cold marble countenance,
Why do you plead: I see you, hear you, still.
"No, no; you must not leave me, I should die
With shame. Come back, come back; ah, feel my heart,
Put your arms round me. Oh, you did not mean
Those bitter bitter words: come back, come back."
No; do not hold your arms out; do not lift
Your poor beseeching face to me again.
If shame could kill you or if love had once
Wounded your heart, then pity might kill me.
But since you never loved, never were true
To God or man; why, when the hour is come,
I say that there are forces in this world
Greater than love or pity: not so great,
Perhaps, in heaven; but greater far on earth:
And I have all these forces in my heart.
In one thing, only one, I did you wrong;
I never should have loved you, that was all.
Such men as I should never breathe our love
To women: we should stand or fall alone;
And claim for friends the lonely sun, the dark
Desolate night and give our visions room
To grow in: the blind world is on our side

With all its grey old cruelties of fate;
And there is no appeal to us. Your tears?
A few more drops in that eternal sea
Of sorrow we hear sighing in our sleep,
What are they to a soul that sees the world
Crimsoned with God's own anguish every hour,
While obscure Christs are crucified in dark
Unnoted Calvaries? Nature drinks their blood
And thrives and blossoms on their agony.
Marble were far more pitiful than those
Who cannot share the lesser griefs and pains,
Because they comprehend them and the laws
That keep the calm blind universe at peace,
At perfect peace, I say, in spite of all
Its wild particular wars, consummate peace;
Even as the heavens eternally comprehend
This little grain of dust we call our earth,
And myriads like it, which with all their woes,
Are in the larger view such quiet stars.
No; no; you must not plead; you must not plead,
Your thoughts and words and dreams wither away
Like waves against a cliff: I cannot hear
Or understand you more than as a voice
Crying from some far world I used to know
Before my birth; a thin unhappy voice,
Meaningless as the stirring of a child
Within its mother's womb: there is a gulf,
A great gulf fixed between us, and we move
On different planes. No word of yours can reach
Me; and you will but hurt your own poor pride
If you should try: no; no; you must not plead:
Child, child, you must not plead: there is no dream
So foolish in this weakling world of ours

As that you call "forgiveness."
There are laws
Of action and reaction; and no force
Can ever be destroyed. Ah yes; I know
That heat may be transfigured into light;
As also I know this—that God forgives
And he that has been injured may forgive;
But, he that injures, never. It would mean
Remorse, you understand, and that is more
Than any man can bear; once let the past,
The might-have-beens and pities flesh their fangs
And they will never leave you. Curse me now;
And I could greet your curses with a smile,
But do not cry for pity to the stars,
Or seek forgiveness from the implacable earth
Or from the soul that sinned so bitterly
And strayed so far from its appointed path
As here on earth to dare to love you, child.
Oh, there are reasons deep as heaven and hell
Why sins like this can never be forgiven.
What can you say to tortured souls like mine
Who hold a world within them, whose blind struggle
Is one with all the conflict of the ages,
God's paradox, God's universal war?
Why, all men know that war is but a crude
And savage way of ending the dispute
Of nations: not a statesman in this world
But knows this better than the petty fools
Who rave against his ugly thirst for blood;
And yet so mighty and so broadly bound
By the great primal laws of ebb and flow,
The laws that rule the winds, the waves, the stars,
Are all these larger motions of the deep

We call humanity, that not the power
Of all earth's loftiest individual souls
Can more than take advantage of a tide
Or ride the tempest out, when once the sun
Summons the winds together and with a shout
Sets red for battle o'er the roaring sea.

One with the larger motions of the deep,
The laws that rule my life are not as yours;
Ah, do not hold your arms out; do not lift
Your poor beseeching face to me again.
Ah, still you plead, my love and queen, you plead.
"I dare not let you leave me," Christ, what tears,
As the poor words rise trembling, "Listen now!
For now I know that all you say is true:
I never loved you; but I never loved
Any on earth: come back to me, come back!
You know that there are moments in the lives
Of women, when they reach the utmost height,
Moments when all their dreams of heaven are flashed
As quintessential blood along their veins
Inspiring them with such divinity
That they outstrip the swiftest thoughts of man
And overrule the laws of time and fate.
Then, with that flash, they see the living truth
And love it, as I stand up now and say
I never loved you till this hour; but now
I love you as I never loved my pride,
I love you as I never loved my life,
I love you as I never loved my God;
Husband; I dare not let you go! My God,
My God, be pitiful. I did not know
That love would be like this: my heart is breaking,

Breaking; ah, feel my heart: give me your hands.
How cold they are, how cold, how cold they are:
Feel, feel my heart; ah, let me warm them there.
You will not leave me; no; God is too good;
Thank God! Thank God! Your tears run down like rain!
You cannot leave me now! Thank God! Thank God!"

I only loved one woman in my life
And you are she, the first and last. Farewell.

There was a meaning once; and still it seems
To elude me by a hair's breadth; yet I think
That I should never have attained: my quest
Was infinite: those eastern empires faded,
Horizon after golden glad horizon,
Into another wider than the world.

The secret never seemed so near as now,
Save once when, sailing o'er a bitter sea
My atheists disproved the eternal God
And I confuted them by lifting up
One hand and pointing to the unfathomed night
Sprinkled with its innumerable stars.
Why, there I conquered and I conquer still;
There, dumb and blind as I, my kingdom lay.
For I must think that all these vast desires
Were leading me to cast aside this weight
Of earth, its limitations and its laws,
In wars that spelt my discontent with less
Than heaven; for which I blindly, bloodily ploughed
My way across the reeling world to God.

Austerlitz, Wagram, Moscow in my hands;

And I in thine, oh God, and I in thine;
The illimitable white wilderness around
The burning city and the long road home;
The white way of the innumerable dead
Horses and men that dotted it for leagues
With little specks of black all stiff and still
Like frozen flies upon a great white wall.

Now all the bands are breaking and I see
All: I am blinded; for I see the Face,
The Face that none can look upon and live;
And I am one with all and God is all;
Nothing but God, I say, nothing but God,
On every side, without me and within.
I triumph, triumph; here, where all is lost,
I say I triumph, here, at Waterloo.
See, as they break, through every gap it streams
Whiter than light, the blinding death of God;
Nothing but God, I say, nothing but God.

I only loved one country in my life,
And that was France: I saw her break her heart
Against the cruel squares: then the last order
Broke from my lips as coldly as a smile.
God! How they rode! All France was in that last
Charge; and France broke her heart for me; I saw
France break her heart: her blood was red
As the long British lines: then some one took
My rein and turned my horse away.

Ninette, Ninette, remember the Old Guard.

SONG.

(AFTER THE FRENCH OF ROSTAND.)

Oh, many a lover sighs
Beneath the summer skies
For black or hazel eyes
All day;
No light of hope can mar
My whiter brighter star;
I love a Princess far
Away.

Now you that haste to meet
Your love's returning feet
Must plead for every sweet
Caress;
But, day and night and day,
Without a prayer to pray,
I love my far away
Princess.

STRANGERS.

We passed with a touch of the hand;
Parted and met no more;
Each sailed from an unknown land
In search of an unknown shore;
Only the touch of your fingers
Clinging a little yet,
Warm and jewelled and light,
A ghost of a memory, lingers
Forbidding the years to forget—
We were ships that passed in the night.

Each on its lonely way,
Each with its laughter and tears,
So is it ever men say
To the end of the flight of years;
We are all of us all alone
Under an infinite sky
Utterly void of light;
We cry to each other and moan;
But none can hear or reply:
We are ships that pass in the night.

We pass, in the crowded streets,
The infinite face of pain:
Its silence pleads and entreats
And our silence answers again:
Each with its own heartache,
Each with its toil and its task,
Passes away out of sight:
Never a word can break
From the moving lips of the mask:
We are ships that pass in the night.

We love, or dream that we love,
A love in love with a dream,
The San Graal brightens above,
We rise and follow the Gleam:
But never a sigh or a kiss
Or ever the death-bell tolls
Can speak, in the years' despite,
Over the dreadful abyss
That hungers between two souls:
We are ships that pass in the night.

ERE THE WINTER.

Ere the winter bring the drouth
  And the fountains harden,
Come, thou South,
  And blow upon my garden:
Sweet is my love's mouth.

His kisses are sweeter
  Than the breath of flowers,
His feet are fleeter,
  When he wanders through the bowers,
Than the hart's upon the mountains:
  His rose-white limbs are as marble and myrrh,
His voice is the sound of the showers
  That fall from the fountains;
There are flowers in his hair.

When I walk with my love
  Where the beautiful rill is,
What gift should I bring him;
What song should I sing him?
  The gift that is fairest in earth and in heaven
  That gift I have given;
I have given my love
  My love that is whiter than lilies.

Many waters cannot quench love,
  Neither can the floods drown it
It is lovelier than Lebanon above
  With pomegranates to crown it;
Frankincense and saffron,
Myrrh and cinnamon;
Many waters cannot quench love,
  Neither can the floods drown it.

Come down into thy garden;
  And death shall not come nigh thee;
Come down into thy garden
  And let the world go by thee;
Jealousy is a breath;
Love is much stronger than death;
Come down into thy garden
  And death shall not come nigh thee.

When the night-wind so still is
  In the leaves of the vine,
You may hear our least kiss,
  My belovéd is mine,
And I am his;
  He feedeth all night among the lilies.

Ere the winter bring the drouth
  And the fountains harden;
Come, thou South,
  And blow upon my garden;
Sweet is my love's mouth.

LOVE IN AUTUMN.

The year is dying; the year of joy is dying;
The year of hope is dying; the falling leaves are red
And a heart is crying, with a bitter bitter crying;
Crying like a woman for a love that is dead.
Did he not love me? Oh, my heart is breaking!
No; no; no; there is nothing here that breaks,
Not even the day: there is only a waking;
But Love can only dream, dear, and die when he wakes.

Will he not come again?
Will he not come again?
No; he is dead;
Quite dead, if his love be dead:
He never will come again.

Will he not come again? The year of hope is dying!
Why did he leave me? The falling leaves are red!
Did he not love me? Ah, the lonely crying,
The lonely lonely crying for a love that is dead.

Ah, the frozen tears in the winter of her sorrow,
The sickening at the heart when the white lips are dumb;
The waiting for the midnight, the moaning for the morrow,
The listening for the footstep she knows will never come.

Will he not come again?
Will he not come again?
No; he is dead;
Quite dead if his love be dead:
He never will come again.

Will he not come again? The year of hope is over:
Spring is in the woods, dear, but Love lies dead:
April brought a message from my first last lover,
A foolish little memory of the sacred things we said:
Oh, happy April, Love is long a-dying,
Your voice is in my heart and your kiss upon my brow;
All the flowers are here again, but every flower is crying
First love and last love, whose heaven are you now?

Will he not come again?
Will he not come again?
No; he is dead;
Quite dead if his love be dead:
He never will come again.

THE DOG-ROSE.

I.

Joy comes and goes
With the wings of a bird:
God hath not much preferred
Love to a poor hedge-rose,
A common and beautiful flower
That endures for a hour.

II.

Yet, far away, on a day in May,
(Hey! but the poppies are red in the grain!)
In an olden golden grey-grown clime,
What was the word of the bird we heard
Singing a-swing on a springing spray,
Till the roses dropped in a rose-red rain
As we strayed and played
With a hope deferred,
Where the dog-rose grew to a doggerel rhyme
And the flower of the May for an hour delayed,
What was the way of the world's one word?
(Hey! but the rue grows bonny with thyme!)

III.

And the moon grew bright as the noon in June
(Hey! but the rue grows bonny with thyme!)
And red as a rose in the red-rose chain,
As lover by lover asleep in the clover
Kissed and kissed by the wind's one tune,
We heard the word of the bird again
Strive and cry
In vain to recover
The rose of the golden grey-grown clime,
The flower unsheathed for an hour to bequeath
Its breath to the death of the sweet time over.
(Hey! but the poppies are red in the grain!)

IV.

Joy comes and goes
With the wings of a bird;
God hath not much preferred
Love to a poor hedge-rose,
A common and beautiful flower
That endures for an hour.

THE LAST WORD.

Yes; Love is only for a day,
Heaven has no more to say:
Love has its little season, bears its flower
And fruit and dies in its appointed hour.
Why should we rave
Over Love's natural grave,
And idly swear that every month is May,
Or that the summer roses blow
Careless of sun and rain and snow
And reckless of the winter? Ah no, no,
How should we know their worth if this were so?
What should we care for Love if we were sure
Love would for evermore endure?
Do we not love sweet mortal eyes
From which the light so quickly fades and dies
Far better than those deep eternal skies?
Love, when we look upon the skies above,
And dare to say, "I love, and God is Love,"
Oh, what if Love be only for a day?
Heaven has no more to say!

BUTTERFLIES.

I.

Once, when Yrma watched the rain
Beat the pane;
Saw the garden of her dreams
Where the clove carnation grows
And the rose
Veiled with shimmering shades and gleams;

Mirrored colours, mystic gleams,
Fairy dreams,
Drifting in her radiant eyes
Half in earnest asked, that day,
Half in play,
Where were all the butterflies?

Where were all the butterflies
When the skies
Clouded and their bowers of clover
Bowed beneath the golden shower?
Every flower
Shook and the rose was brimming over.

Ah, the dog-rose trembling over
Thyme and clover,
How it glitters in the sun,
Now the hare-bells lift again
Bright with rain
After all the showers are done!

Ah, when all the showers are done,
How the sun
Softly smiling o'er the scene
Bids the white wings come and go
To and fro
Through the maze of gold and green.

Magic webs of gold and green
Rainbow sheen
Mesh the maze of flower and fern,
Cuckoo-grass and meadow-sweet,
And the wheat
Where the crimson poppies burn.

Ay; and where the poppies burn,
They return
All across the dreamy downs,
Little wings that flutter and beat
O'er the sweet
Bluffs the purple clover crowns.

Where the fairy clover crowns
Dreamy downs,
And amidst the golden grass
Buttercups and daisies blow
To and fro
When the shadowy billows pass;

Time has watched them pause and pass
Where Love was;
Ah, what fairy butterflies,
Little wild incarnate blisses,
Coloured kisses,
Floating under azure skies!

Under those eternal skies
See, they rise:
Mottled wings of moony sheen,
Wings in whitest star-shine dipped,
Orange-tipped,
Eyed with black and veined with green.

They were fairies plumed with green
Rainbow-sheen
Ere Time bade their host begone
From that palace built of roses
Which still dozes
In the greenwood all alone.

In the greenwood all alone
And unknown:
Now they roam these mortal dells
Wondering where that happy glade is,
Painted Ladies,
Admirals, and Tortoise-shells.

Oh Fritillaries, Admirals,
Tortoise-shells;
You, like fragments of the skies
Fringed with Autumn's richest hues,
Dainty blues
Patterned with mosaic dyes;

Oh, and you whose peacock dyes
Gleam with eyes;
You, whose wings of burnished copper
Burn upon the sunburnt brae
Where all day
Whirrs the hot and grey grasshopper;

While the grey grasshopper whirrs
In the furze,
You that with your sulphur wings
Melt into the gold perfume
Of the broom
Where the linnet sits and sings;

You that, as a poet sings,
On your wings
Image forth the dreams of earth,
Quickening them in form and hue
To the new
Glory of a brighter birth;

You that bring to a brighter birth
Dust and earth
Rapt to glory on your wings,
All transfigured in the white
Living light
Shed from out the soul of things;

Heralds of the soul of things,
You whose wings
Carry heaven through every glade;
Thus transfigured from the petals
Death unsettles,
Little souls of leaf and blade;

You that mimic bud and blade,
Light and shade;
Tinted souls of leaf and stone,
Flower and sunny bank of sand,
Fairyland
Calls her children to their own;

Calls them back into their own
Great unknown;
Where the harmonies they cull
On their wings are made complete
As they beat
Through the Gate called Beautiful.

II.

Butterflies! They blaze and burn
O'er the fern!
Though our words and dreams that yearn
Pass away beyond regret
And forget,
These remember and return.

These remember; these return:
Thoughts that burn,
Hopes that open wings of bloom
Pass away beyond the skies,
Butterflies
Mock their glory and their gloom:

Mock their glory and their gloom
And their doom;
Through the glad ephemeral glow
Shed around beneath above
Death and Love,
Ah, what white wings come and go?

Ah, what white wings come and go
To and fro,
Wanderers towards a ghostly goal,
Fluttering with the golden hours
Through the flowers
In the gardens of the soul?

In the gardens of the soul
Joy and dole
Lift their chaliced blossoms up,
Brimming with the last divine
Drops of wine
Caught from heaven's communion cup.

Over every gleaming cup
Wandering up,
Wandering up into the sun
Glories of the might-have-been
Float serene
After all the showers are done.

III.

Butterflies! They burn and blaze
Through the haze;

While our loves and dreams that yearn
  Pass away beyond regret
    And forget,
These remember and return :

These remember : these return :
    These that yearn
Ever towards a phantom sun :
  These that seek, baffled and blind,
    The unresigned
Hope of years whose dreams are done.

Yes ; when youth is over and done ;
    One by one
These return : their longer date
  Makes a wider mark for scorn :
    They were born
Paupers ; yet assume such state.

Forth they flaunt in royal state :
    Time and Fate
Circumscribe their skies with gloom ;
  And the wings that wink with bliss
    Kiss and kiss
All too often on a tomb.

Basking on a sunlit tomb
    They relume
Grey old memories with their gleams,
  Gleams, we dream, of infinite
    Heavenly light ;
Ah, poor dreams, poor dreams, poor dreams.

Dreams, ah God, we name them dreams,
Only dreams;
Till the name has power to dull
All the soul that might perceive
Where dreams live,
Past the Gate called Beautiful.

IV.

Over many a broken urn
They return;
Fluttering, floating butterflies,
Fledged with flowers for fairy flight
Soft as light,
Sweet and bright as Yrma's eyes.

Ah, the dreams in Yrma's eyes!
Had the skies
Broken into tiny wings,
Fans reflecting every hue
Of the blue
Where the skylark soars and sings;

Had the essential soul that sings
Visible wings;
Had the notes for sheer delight
Fluttered out into the sun
One by one,
Clad with colour and winged with light;

Had the music changed to light
Wild and white;
Then such quintessential wings
Wandering from their radiant home,
So would roam
Through the bower where Yrma sings.

Even now, when Yrma sings,
Ah, what wings
Flutter with our human dreams
Through the glory and the glow
To and fro,
Over what enchanted streams?

Over what enchanted streams,
Ah, what dreams!
Ere Love's eyes forget the skies. . . .
Hush, Time whispers, and the rain
Asks in vain,
'Whither went the butterflies?"

DREAM VOICES.

I.

When I wander by the water,
By the myriad-twinkling water,
By the sunny laughing water of the sea;
Where the little fishes tipple,
All the little fairy people's voices ripple,
Ripple, ripple,
Unto me;
Oh, the men of old were wise,
They saw the Rose arise
A rainbow to the windward, a twinkle to the lee,
They saw the Rose arise,
A Rose of Foam arise,
They knew her, they named her, the Daughter of the Sea,
With the deep and violet eyes.
Oh, wiser far than we!
For the clearest of the skies
Never knew such happy laughter,
Never looked so deep and true
As the dainty dancing water of a bay of bonny blue,
Ripple ripple following after
Of the laughter
Of the water
Of the sunny laughing water of the sea.

II.

When I wander by the water,
By the sad, the bitter water,
By the melancholy water of the sea;
When the billow plunges loud,
And the soul with care is bowed,
And the sun is lost in cloud,
Unto me;
Like the face of one long dead,
Duller, heavier than lead
Are the waters;
But they plunge with a sullen slow retreat and a plunge,
And they moan,
And they plunge in monotone,
And I hearken
In a dream,
While they plunge with a sullen slow retreat and a plunge
And recede in a stream;
And I hearken, and I hearken,
—Through their plunging monotone—
In a long and weary dream;
I hearken for a voice for ever fled,
And I seek a face for ever vanishéd,
But they moan and they moan,
And I dream;
While the thunder-clouds o'er-darken
All the waste of sombre water,
All the sad, the bitter water,
All the melancholy water of the sea.

SONG OF THE WOODEN-LEGGED FIDDLER.

(PORTSMOUTH, 1805.)

I LIVED in a cottage adown in the West
When I was a boy, a boy;
But I knew no peace and I took no rest
Though the roses nigh smothered my snug little nest;
For the smell of the sea
Was much rarer to me,
And the life of a sailor was all my joy.

CHORUS.—*The life of a sailor was all my joy!*

My mother she wept, and she begged me to stay
Anchored for life to her apron-string,
And soon she would want me to help wi' the hay;
So I bided her time, then I flitted away
On a night of delight in the following spring,
With a pair of stout shoon
And a seafaring tune
And a bundle and stick in the light of the moon,
Down the long road
To Portsmouth I strode,
To fight like a sailor for country and king.

CHORUS.—*To fight like a sailor for country and king.*

And now that my feet are turned homeward again
My heart is still crying Ahoy! Ahoy!
And my thoughts are still out on the Spanish main
A-chasing the frigates of France and Spain,
For at heart an old sailor is always a boy;
And his nose will still itch
For the powder and pitch
Till the days when he can't tell t'other from which,
Nor a grin o' the guns from a glint o' the sea,
Nor a skipper like Nelson from lubbers like me.

CHORUS.—*Nor a skipper like Nelson from lubbers like me.*

Ay! Now that I'm old I'm as bold as the best,
And the life of a sailor is all my joy;
Though I've swapped my leg
For a wooden peg
And my head is as bald as a new-laid egg,
The smell of the sea
Is like victuals to me,
And I think in the grave I'll be crying Ahoy!
For, though my old carcass is ready to rest,
At heart an old sailor is always a boy.

CHORUS.—*At heart an old sailor is always a boy.*

THE FISHER-GIRL.

WHERE the old grey churchyard slopes to the sea,
On the sunny side of a mossed headstone;
Watching the wild white butterflies pass
Through the fairy forests of grass,
Two little children with brown legs bare
Were merrily merrily
Weaving a wonderful daisy-chain,
And chanting the rhyme that was graven there
Over and over and over again;
While the warm wind came and played with their hair
And laughed and was gone
Out, far out to the foam-flowered lea
Like an ocean-wandering memory.

Eighteen hundred and forty-three,
Dan Trevennick was lost at sea:
And, buried here at her husband's side
Lies the body of Joan, his bride,
Who, a little while after she lost him, died.

This was the rhyme that was graven there,
And the children chanted it quietly;
As the warm wind came and played with their hair
And rustled the golden grasses against the stone,
And laughed and was gone

To waken the wild white flowers of the sea,
And sing a song of the days that were,
A song of memory, gay and blind
As the sun on the graves that it left behind;
For this, ah this, was the song of the wind.

I.

She sat on the tarred old jetty, with a sailor's careless ease,
And the clear waves danced around her feet and kissed her tawny knees;
Her head was bare, and her thick black hair was coiled behind a throat
Chiselled as hard and bright and bold as the bow of a sailing boat.

II.

Her eyes were blue, and her jersey was blue as the lapping, slapping seas,
And the rose in her cheek was painted red by the brisk Atlantic breeze;
And she sat and waited her father's craft, while Dan Trevennick's eyes
Were sheepishly watching her sunlit smiles and her soft contented sighs.

III.

For he thought he would give up his good black pipe and his evening glasses of beer,
And blunder to chapel on Sundays again for a holy Christian year,
To hold that foot in his hard rough hand and kiss the least of its toes:
Then he swore at himself for a great damned fool; which he probably was, God knows.

IV.

Often in summer twilights, too, he would sit on a coil of rope,
As the stars came out in their twinkling crowds to play with wonder and hope,
While he watched the side of her clear-cut face as she sat on the jetty and fished,
And even to help her coil her line was more than he hoped or wished.

V.

But once or twice o'er the dark green tide he saw with a solemn delight,
Hooked and splashing after her line, a flash and a streak of white;
As hand over hand she hauled it up, a great black conger eel,
For Dan Trevennick to kill as it squirmed with its head beneath his heel.

VI.

And at last, with a crash and a sunset cry from the low soft evening star,
A shadowy schooner suddenly loomed o'er the dark green oily bar;
With fairy-like spars and misty masts in the golden dusk of gloaming,
Where the last white seamew's wide-spread wings were wistfully westward roaming;

VII.

Then the song of the foreign seamen rose in the magical evening air,
Faint and far away as it seemed, but they knew it was, ah, so near;
Far away as her heart from Dan's as he sheepishly drew to her side,
And near as her heart when he kissed the lips of his newly promised bride.

VIII.

And when they were riding away in the train on the eve of their honeymoon,
What a shy sweet folly awoke at a whisper and blushed like a rose in June;
For she said, "I am tired and ready for bed," and Dan said, "So am I;"
And she murmured, "Are you tired, too, poor Dan?" and he answered her, "No, dear, why?"

IX.

It was never the folly of wisdom, at least, and the end of it all is this;
They were drowned in the bliss of their ignorance and buried the rest in a kiss;
And they loved one another their whole life long, as lovers will often do;
For it never was only the fairy-tales that rang so royally true.

X.

The rose in her cheek was painted red by the brisk Atlantic breeze;
Her eyes were blue, and her jersey was blue as the lapping, slapping seas;
Her head was bare, and her thick black hair was coiled behind a throat
Chiselled as hard and bright and bold as the bow of a sailing boat.

XI.

Eighteen hundred and forty-three,
Dan Trevennick was lost at sea:
And, buried here at her husband's side
Lies the body of Joan, his bride,
Who, a little while after she lost him, died.

A SONG OF TWO BURDENS.

THE round brown sails were reefed and struggling home
Over the glitter and gloom of the angry deep:
Dark in the cottage she sang, "Soon, soon, he will come,
Dreamikin, Drowsy-head, sleep, my little one, sleep."

Over the glitter and gloom of the angry deep
Was it only a dream or a shadow that vanished away?
"Lullaby, little one, sleep, my little one, sleep,"
She sang in a dream as the shadows covered the day.

Was it only a sail or a shadow that vanished away?
The boats come home: there is one that will never return;
But she sang in a dream as the shadows buried the day;
And she set the supper and begged the fire to burn.

The boats come home; but one will never return;
And a strangled cry went up from the struggling sea;
She sank on her knees and begged the fire to burn,
"Burn, oh burn, for my love is coming to me!"

A strangled cry went up from the struggling sea,
A cry where the ghastly surf to the moon-dawn rolled;
Burn, oh burn; for my love is coming to me,
His hands will be scarred with the ropes and starved with the cold.

A strangled cry where the foam in the moonlight rolled,
A bitter cry from the heart of the ghastly sea;
His hands will be frozen, the night is dark and cold,
Burn, oh burn, for my love is coming to me.

One cry to God from the soul of the shuddering sea,
One moment of stifling lips and struggling hands;
Burn, oh burn; for my love is coming to me;
And oh, I think the little one understands.

One moment of stifling lips and struggling hands,
Then only the glitter and gloom of the angry deep;
And oh, I think the little one understands;
Dreamikin, Drowsy-head, sleep, my little one, sleep.

WAITING—WESTERN COAST.

It's only sixteen years he has, and gone to be a sailor!
His father, too, was lost at sea, sixteen years ago;
And I'm waiting all alone, waiting all alone;
He never saw the trembling hands that asked him not to go;
And stormy 'tis to-night, with the white foam flying,
Flying o'er the cottages and drifting up the lane,
And it's wide awake I'm lying to hear the dark sea crying
And crying me myself till the boy comes home again.

Come back! come back! You never should have left me:
It's out upon the sea you are, and my heart that has the pain,
With the white foam flying and the dark waves crying,
Crying, always crying, till my boy comes home again:
Bachgen![1] *bachgen! Come back! come home again!*

Young, so young! O, why do neighbours ask me
If the ship is come to port? She was due a month ago!
And I'm waiting all alone, waiting all alone.
Why do they whisper? Do they think I do not *know?*

[1] *Bachgen*=little one.

Cold it is to-night, with the sea-wind wailing,
Wailing like a woman in the dark and the rain;
The wind it is that's wailing; but my heart, my heart is failing,
My life is failing in me till the boy comes home again.

Come back! come back! You never should have left me;
It's out upon the sea you are, and my heart that has the pain,
With the white foam flying and the dark waves crying,
Crying, always crying, till my boy comes home again:
Bachgen! bachgen! Come back! come home again!

It's only sixteen years he had, and him the strong young swimmer,
And O, I wish he could not swim, he'd fight so hard I know;
And I'm waiting all alone, waiting all alone;
Remembering how he used to talk and him so glad to go;
Dark it is to-night and a deeper dark to-morrow;
And a darker crying in the wind and rain;
A deeper dark to-morrow, and a darker sorrow,
Crying, crying, crying till the boy comes home again!

Come back! come back! You never should have left me,
It's down below the sea you are, and the world that has the pain!
With the white foam flying and the dark waves crying,
Crying, crying, crying till my boy comes home again:
Bachgen! bachgen! Come back! come home again.

EARTH-BOUND.

Ghosts? Love would fain believe,
  Earth being so sweet, the dead might wish to return!
  Is it so strange if, even in heaven, they yearn
For the May-time and the dreams it used to give?

Through dark abysms of Space,
  From strange new spheres where Death has called them now
  May they not, with a crown on every brow,
Still cry to the loved earth's lost familiar face?

We two, love, we should come
  Seeking a little refuge from the light
  Of the blinding terrible star-sown Infinite,
Seeking some sheltering roof, some four-walled home.

From that too high, too wide
  Communion with the universe and God,
  How sweet to creep back to some lane we trod
Hemmed in with a hawthorn hedge on either side.

Fresh from death's boundless birth,
  How sweet the circled vision of the sea
  Would seem to souls tired of Infinity,
How sweet the soft blue boundaries of earth,

How sweet the nodding spray
  Of pale green leaves that made the sapphire deep
  A background to the dreams of that brief sleep
We called our life when heaven was far away.

How strange would be the sight
  Of the little towns and twisted streets again,
  Where all the hurrying works and ways of men
Would seem a children's game for our delight.

What boundless heaven could give
  This joy in the strait austere restraints of earth,
  Whereof the dead have felt the immortal dearth
Who look upon God's face and cannot live?

Our ghosts would clutch at flowers
  As drowning men at straws, for fear the sea
  Should sweep them back to God's Eternity,
Still clinging to the day that once was ours.

No more with fevered brain
  Plunging across the gulfs of Space and Time
  Would we revisit this our earthly clime
We two, if we could ever come again;

Not as we came of old,
  But reverencing the flesh we now despise
  And gazing out with consecrated eyes,
Each of us glad of the other's hand to hold.

So we should wander nigh
  Our mortal home, and see its little roof
  Keeping the deep eternal night aloof
And yielding us a refuge from the sky.

We should steal in, once more,
Under the cloudy lilac at the gate,
Up the walled garden, then with hearts elate
Forget the stars and close our cottage door.

Oh then, as children use
To make themselves a little hiding-place,
We would rejoice in narrowness of space,
And God should give us nothing more to lose.

How sweet it all would seem
To souls that from the æonian ebb and flow
Came down to hear once more the to and fro
Swing o' the clock dictate its hourly theme.

How sweet the strange recall
From vast antiphonies of joy and pain
Beyond the grave, to these old books again,
That cosy lamp, those pictures on the wall.

Home! Home! The old desire!
We would shut out the innumerable skies,
Draw close the curtains, then with patient eyes
Bend o'er the hearth; laugh at our memories,
Or watch them crumbling in the crimson fire.

A SONG OF EXILE.

I.

When the weary winds are wailing, and the sheep are huddled low
In the bracken and the heather like shivering drifts of snow,
I hear the music of the Loom that weaves the weft of years,
And through the gloom there creeps a light of old unhappy tears,
And bright as morning dew they shine on the flowers across the foam
That severs me for ever from my heart's old home;
Home! Home!
My heart is breaking, breaking with the cry for home!

II.

Ah, the faces in the firelight that I ne'er shall see again,
And the music of the memory that aches in heart and brain,
And the laugh of old companions and the gift that April gave;
Though all the golden gifts of earth are borrowed from the grave!
Love, I hear thee whispering across the waste of foam
That severs me for ever from the sweet old home;
Home! Home!
My heart is breaking, breaking with the cry for home!

III.

Through the world of outer darkness life and light must range,
Though they cannot die they change as all the wheeling seasons change;
All the lovely lips and voices fade with flower and tree,
While the spirit sinks like music through Eternity:
"Come," the blue horizon murmurs, laughing, "ah, but come;
Heaven is but a weft of dream that severs thee from home!"
Home! Home!
All the world's a weft of dream that severs me from home!
Home! Home! Home! ah, Home!
My heart is breaking, breaking with the cry for home!

THE LAST TRYST.

With all the heavens aflower above
At Summer's rosy rally,
Across the Hills of Time, my love,
We sought the happy valley;
And hand in hand, a merry throng,
We laughed at sun and shadow,
And chattered, as we danced along
The road to Eldorado
With flowers and song.

Across the purple Hills of Dream,
Amid the silent heather,
We plunged through many a silver stream
Of scent and sleep together;
Deep in the flowery heat of noon
We sought the Heart's Desire;
Under the sunset and the moon
Our prayer went up like fire—
Come soon, soon, soon!

At night we saw the golden stars,
And wandered on and wondered,
When o'er his rolling reefs and bars
The silver ocean thundered;

Ah, suddenly the silent deep
Of heaven grew dark and dreary,
And some lay down to wake and weep,
And some, for they were weary,
Fell fast asleep.

We could not brave that bitter way,
When youth and hope were banished;
Our hearts grew old and wise and grey,
The golden vision vanished;
And yet, my love, we never missed
The bright Elysian bowers,
Here, in our little cottage kissed
With sun and gilly-flowers,
Where birds keep tryst.

And now that I go first to find
The goal we sought together,
And you must struggle on behind
Through good and evil weather,
The burden and the heat of noon
We found so sweet to bear, love,
Will wane beneath the harvest moon;
But you will join me there, love;
Come soon, love, soon!

ART.

"The voice of one crying in the wilderness."

I.

Beyond; beyond; and yet again beyond!
What went ye out to seek, oh foolish-fond?
Is not the heart of all things here and now?
Is not the circle infinite, and the centre
Everywhere, if ye would but hear and enter?
Come; the porch bends and the great pillars bow.

II.

Come; come and see the secret of the sun;
The sorrow that holds the warring worlds in one;
The pain that holds Eternity in an hour;
One God in every seed self-sacrificed,
One star-eyed, star-crowned universal Christ,
Re-crucified in every wayside flower.

THE OPTIMIST.

Teach me to live and to forgive
  The death that all must die
Who pass in slumber through this heaven
  Of earth and sea and sky;

Who live by grace of Time and Space
  At which their peace is priced;
And cast their lots upon the robe
  That wraps the cosmic Christ;

Who cannot see the world-wide Tree
  Where Love lies bleeding still;
This universal cross of God
  Our star-crowned Igdrasil.

Teach me to live; I do not ask
  For length of earthly days,
Or that my heaven-appointed task
  Should fall in pleasant ways;

If in this hour of warmth and light
  The last great knell were knolled;
If Death should close mine eyes to-night
  And all the tale be told;

While I have lips to speak or sing
And power to draw this breath,
Shall I not praise my Lord and King
Above all else, for death?

Not for the blindness and the sleep
In which the world goes by;
But for the wakening to the deep
Dawn of Eternity.

When on a golden eve he drove
His keenest sorrow deep
Deep in my heart, and called it love;
I did not wince or weep.

A wild Hosanna shook the world
And wakened all the sky,
As through a white and burning light
Her passionate face went by.

When on a golden dawn he called
My best beloved away,
I did not shrink or stand appalled
Before the hopeless day.

The joy of that triumphant dearth
And anguish cannot die;
The joy that casts aside this earth
For immortality.

I would not change one word of doom
Upon the dreadful scroll,
That gave her body to the tomb
And freed her fettered soul.

For now each idle breeze can bring
The kiss I never seek ;
The nightingale has heard her sing,
The rose has kissed her cheek.

And every pang of every grief
That ruled my soul an hour,
Has given new splendours to the leaf,
New glories to the flower ;

And melting earth into the heaven
Whose inmost heart is pain,
Has drawn the veils apart and given
Her soul to mine again.

LOVE'S AGONY.

Tired of each other? No; strangely enough,
Love turns to Hate; but he never can tire:
Be the road of his wandering smooth or rough
He has wings of light and a heart of fire;
And the eyes that were quick as a bird's to note
A beauty that only their love could catch
From each poise of your head and each curve of your throat
Are as quick on the quest of a hate to match.

The turn of the phrase that summoned the smile,
The foolish words that we loved so well;
Try them to-day; they have served us awhile
In heaven; and now they must crackle in hell
Like sharp dry thorns that the devil has cast
Under the seething cauldron of hate,
Where we torture the poor damned ghosts of the past
With the dead desires that we desecrate.

And yet there is nothing between us two
But a word, a shadow, a dream, a breath;
I would die for you still, I know; and you
Would take my hand and go down to death

More gladly now than you ever dreamed
You could walk through life with your hand in mine,
When death, in the distance, had only seemed
A holier light on our love's dim shrine.

Still, still it is ours, that deep old love
Which we never shall tell now, soul to soul;
For the depths are hidden by storms above,
And the troubled surface conceals the whole.
It is strange that the soul's inheritance
May be lost or gained by a curve of the brow,
And the curl of the lip that had won love, once,
Must quietly nurture his agony now.

Each yearns for the other; yet each is blind
To the yearning and wilfully wide awake
To every shadow that doubt can find,
Hunger nourish, or Truth mistake;
And we juggle there in the dark with words,
And fling their dust in each other's eyes!
Oh, eyes that were quick and kind as a bird's,
Have we quite forgotten our Paradise?

I wish we could kill this Love with the sword
Of knowledge or scorn or hope or fear;
For he summons up such an unruly horde
Of ghosts from the graves that we held so dear;
And all the passions flock to his flag,
And their Babel bewilders the wildwood maze,
Where the strong soul sinks like a hunted stag
That the hounds are tearing a hundred ways.

We never have known each other, we two;
  Could we only know, it would still be well,
But we dazzle the courts of the shrine we knew
  With the victim doves that we buy and sell.
And the void in our hearts we have filled with wind
  And words that shift and shimmer and lie,
In a thousand colours that baffle and blind
  The strenuous brain and the steadfast eye.

Ah, stab, if you will: strike straight to the heart!
  Strike! Let the life-blood prove it is red;
Bid the poor struggling spirits depart
  Who have spilled the wine and spoiled the bread;
The cross and the crown were so easy to bear,
  And the passionate wounds in palm and side;
But we—we have made of a mouthful of air
  A burden unknown to the Crucified.

AFTER PARTING.

It is finished! Ah, who said it?
Is it you or I or only
God that makes the path so lonely
Now we separately tread it?
Does God play with us for pastime;
Does he make you sorrow, too, love?
Surely Love was dead we knew, love,
When we parted for the last time.
It is finished.

No, indeed; the love we cherished
Had no part in such as this is;
Like blown roses broke our kisses
Fluttered on the breeze and perished,
Dust to dust; but on no morrow
Dare we meet till death looks deeper
Wakening this that like a sleeper
Moans with wild prophetic sorrow—
It is finished.

THE CHOICE.

I.

Ah, well; you have heard my story; and yet, you say, I must
choose;
And so there's my friend or yourself, my queen, to keep or to lose.
Be patient: the choice is easy; it is only so hard to say it;
Though I see by the hard hard light in your eyes, of course, that my
eyes betray it.

II.

You ask me to set the heart of a woman against the soul of a man,
Who came to my side in the darkness as only a comrade can,
And looked me straight in the eyes with eyes that struck their honest
steel
Through and through my struggling soul to strengthen it and to heal.

III.

It is not from a sense of justice that I make my choice to-night:
I have lived too long to be over-nice in my sense of the wrong and
the right;
And I love you more than I knew I did; and yet, far, far above
My dreams, I sometimes think I see the light of a better love.

IV.

It is just for that very reason, my sense of the right and the wrong
Being dulled like a sword in the battle, I can stand alone and be strong :
Defeat has its own great triumphs and sin has its thorny crown ;
And the sorrow of Judas in one thing was more than Christ had known.

V.

Sin has its own grey wisdom ; thank God, you never will know
The weight of the terrible reason why I dare not let him go !
It is not that I covet the righteous mantle in which my dreams have arrayed him ;
But he trusted me, once, with his deadliest secret ; and I went away and betrayed him.

VI.

God has given you beauty, my queen ; your face was carved in heaven ;
He has given you many a gift beside, but one he has not given :
You never have known the light that strikes on the heights as you descend
Down, far down, in the darkness, to betray the heart of a friend.

VII.

I dare not let him go, my queen, for a love like ours : the sun
Would mock me until the latest sands of my barren life were run,
Do you know that, after I went away and betrayed him, when he had heard
Of what I had done, he gave me his hand and said not a single word ?

VIII.

And he trusted me twice; and thrice again I was tried, my queen, and
I fell:
Then he came to me with a writhing fire in his eyes like the fires of
hell,
And said, "I will trust you still; you may go and betray me now to
the end,
To the end, to the uttermost, if you will; but I claim you still as my
friend."

IX.

You see we had wrought and fought together, and talked of our hearts'
desire,
From the brave old undergraduate nights when we smoked o'er a
college fire;
And so; well it may seem strange to you; but the love of a man for
a man
Was the salt of the earth long long before Dan Cupid's game began.

X.

It has won more battles and built more cities and wasted far less
breath;
It has helped poor cowards to hurl the lie in the grinning teeth of
Death:
Do you think when we stood on the bloody ridge where the enemy's
guns had been,
That the sudden clinch of our clasped black hands meant less than
your white arms mean?

XI.

Ah no; the fire-tried love of a man for a man is the salt of the earth:
No woman of five *grandes passions* can know what that love is worth!
Your loves will come and your loves will go as you walk your primrose way,
And my own poor dreams will come to an end in the way they began, some day.

XII.

And so for all those April hours and the joy of that night in June,
And the jaunty rose in your Romeo's ear and the songs he made to the moon,
Though Juliet's mouth like a scarlet flower were crushed against my kiss,
I think I would go my ways, my dear, and Cupid should go his.

A LOVERS' QUARREL.

Good-bye; good-bye: in spite of all,
  Heaven holds our hearts in fee;
And you can never quite recall
  The love God gave to me:

And though those eyes that once were kind
  Are filled so full with hate,
See, Love comes creeping, dumb and blind,
  To point us to our fate.

Good-bye! Is this the end at last?
  Ah love, indeed it is!
Come, let the bitter past be past
  For ever—one last kiss,

And then, for me the night; for you
  Another dawn, I fear,
Another love to greet this new
  Awakening of the year.

The new love will be truer far
  And nobler than the old;
A glory such as those that star
  The fabled Age of Gold.

You two will hear the throstle sing
Under the hawthorn bough,
Your hands will close and clasp and cling
As ours are clinging now.

Your love will use the same old words
We used a year ago;
You'll murmur with the leaves and birds
And watch the sunset glow,

But when the Spring is here again
And all the flowers return,
Perhaps you'll linger down the lane
With hearts that beat and yearn.

"When other lips" you know, and when
I'm far across the sea;
You'll wander down that golden glen,
And you'll remember me.

Good-bye; I know, in spite of all,
Just as we turn to part,
Your heart will give one last quick call
And hang upon my heart.

THE SHADOWY RIVER.

I.

SUMMER is come in the strength of the year,
—Laughing he shakes from his golden hair
Drops of the sunny dew;
Soon he will carry a load of care,
But never the more to rue:
White Owl flits through the dusk of the wood—
Care is good, for corn is good,
Tu-whit, tu-whit, tu-whoo!
By night and day I float away
Till all the world be old and grey,
Down to an ocean blue;
On a lonely river, for ever and ever,
A mystic river, a shadowy river,
Down to a shoreless ocean blue,
I slowly slide, I dimly glide,
In the gloaming I float on the quiet tide,
In a crystalline canoe.

II.

A thousand summers, a thousand springs,
The world with an ancient melody rings,
False and for ever true,
When the bird in the hawthorn blossom sings
Old songs that are ever new,
White Owl flits through the dusk of the wood—
Forget the ill, ye forget the good,
Tu-whit, tu-whit, tu-whoo !
By night and day I float away,
The banks are high, the banks are grey,
Down to an ocean blue;
On a lonely river that mirrors ever
A fair far sky, but the trees that shiver,
The leaves that fall and the willows that quiver
Far, far over the shadowy river,
The banks so high and steep and grey,
Hide the length and the breadth of day
From me who glide below;
Who slowly slide and dimly glide
In the gloaming over the quiet tide,
The depth of day and the breadth to know
When over the rolling roar I go
Of the shoreless ocean blue,
In a crystalline canoe.

THE UNIVERSALIST.

I.

He sat with his foolish mouth agape at the golden glare of the sea,
And his wizened and wintry flaxen locks fluttered around his ears
And his foolish infinite eyes were full of the sky's own glitter and glee,
As he dandled an old Dutch Doll on his knee and sang the song
of the spheres.

II.

Blue and red and yellow and green they are melting away in the white;
Hey! but the wise old world was wrong and my idiot heart was right;
Yes; and the merry-go-round of the stars rolls to my cracked old tune,
Hey! diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon.

III.

Then he cradled his doll on his crooning heart and cried as a sea-
bird cries;
And the hot sun reeled like a drunken god through the violent
violet vault:
And the hillside cottage that danced to the deep debauch of the per-
fumed skies
Grew palsied and white in the purple heath as a pillar of Dead Sea
salt.

IV.

There were three gaunt sun-flowers nigh his chair: they were yellow as death and tall;
And they threw their sharp blue shadowy stars on the blind white wizard wall;
And they nodded their heads to the weird old hymn that daunted the light of the noon,
Hey! diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon.

V.

The little dog laughed and leered with the white of his eye as he sidled away
To stare at the dwarfish hunchback waves that crawled to the foot of the hill,
For his master's infinite mind was wide to the wealth of the night and the day;
The walls were down: it was one with the Deep that only a God can fill.

VI.

Then a tiny maiden of ten sweet summers arrived with a song and a smile,
And she swung on the elfin garden gate and sung to the sea for a while,
And a phantom face went weeping by and a ghost began to croon
Hey! diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon.

VII.

And she followed a butterfly up to his chair; and the lunatic caught at her hand
And stared at her wide blue startled eyes and muttered, "My dear, I have been,
In fact, I am there at this moment, I think, in a wonderful fairy-land:"
And he bent and he whispered it low in her ear—"*I know why the grass is green.*

VIII.

"I know why the daisy is white, my dear, I know why the seas are blue;
I know that the world is a dream, my dear, and I know that the dream is true;
I know why the rose and the toad-stool grow, as a curse and a crimson boon,
Hey! diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon.

IX.

"If I gaze at a rose, do you know, it grows till it overshadows the earth,
Like a wonderful Tree of Knowledge, my dear, the Tree of our evil and good;
But I dare not tell you the terrible vision that gave the toad-stool birth,
The dream of a heart that breaks, my dear, and a Tree that is bitter with blood.

X.

"Oh, Love may wander wide as the wind that blows from sea to sea,
But a wooden dream, for me, my dear, and a painted memory;
For the God that has bidden the toad-stool grow has writ in his cosmic rune,
Hey! diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon."

XI.

Then he stared at the child and he laughed aloud, and she suddenly screamed and fled,
For she felt he was dreaming he lured her away to a quarry that gapped the hill,
To hurtle her down and grin as her gold hair scattered around her head
Far, far below, like a sunflower disk, so crimson-spattered and still.

XII.

"Ah, hush!" he cried; and his dark old eyes were wet with a sacred love
As he kissed the wooden face of his doll and winked at the skies above,
"I know, I know why the toad-stools grow, and the rest of the world will, soon;
Hey! diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon."

XIII.

Blue and red and yellow and green they are all mixed up in the white;
Hey! but the wise old world was wrong and my idiot heart was right;
Yes; and the merry-go-round of the stars rolls to my cracked old tune,
Hey! diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle, the cow jumped over the moon.

THE BARREL-ORGAN.

THERE's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
And fulfilled it with the sunset glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light;
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And now it's marching onward through the realms of old romance,
And trolling out a fond familiar tune,
And now it's roaring cannon down to fight the King of France,
And now it's prattling softly to the moon,
And all around the organ there's a sea without a shore
Of human joys and wonders and regrets;
To remember and to recompense the music evermore
For what the cold machinery forgets. . . .

Yes; as the music changes,
Like a prismatic glass,
It takes the light and ranges
Through all the moods that pass;

Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets,
And gives the world a glimpse of all
The colours it forgets.

And there *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song;
And there *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
And bolder knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance,
Than ever here on earth below
Have whirled into—*a dance!*—

Go down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland;
Go down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

The cherry-trees are seas of bloom and soft perfume and sweet perfume,
The cherry-trees are seas of bloom (and oh, so near to London!)
And there they say, when dawn is high and all the world's a blaze of sky
The cuckoo, though he's very shy, will sing a song for London.

The nightingale is rather rare and yet they say you'll hear him there
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London!)
The linnet and the throstle, too, and after dark the long halloo
And golden-eyed *tu-whit, tu-whoo* of owls that ogle London.

For Noah hardly knew a bird of any kind that isn't heard
At Kew, at Kew in lilac-time (and oh, so near to London !)
And when the rose begins to pout and all the chestnut spires are out
You'll hear the rest without a doubt, all chorussing for London :—

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time ;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London !)
And you shall wander hand in hand with love in summer's wonderland ;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London !)

And then the troubadour begins to thrill the golden street,
In the City as the sun sinks low ;
And in all the gaudy buses there are scores of weary feet
Marking time, sweet time, with a dull mechanic beat,
And a thousand hearts are plunging to a love they'll never meet,
Through the meadows of the sunset, through the poppies and the wheat,
In the land where the dead dreams go.

Verdi, Verdi, when you wrote *Il Trovatore* did you dream
Of the City when the sun sinks low,
Of the organ and the monkey and the many-coloured stream
On the Piccadilly pavement, of the myriad eyes that seem
To be litten for a moment with a wild Italian gleam
As *A che la morte* parodies the world's eternal theme
And pulses with the sunset-glow.

There's a thief, perhaps, that listens with a face of frozen stone
In the City as the sun sinks low ;
There's a portly man of business with a balance of his own,
There's a clerk and there's a butcher of a soft reposeful tone,

And they're all of them returning to the heavens they have known:
They are crammed and jammed in buses and—they're each of them alone
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a very modish woman and her smile is very bland
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And her hansom jingles onward, but her little jewelled hand
Is clenched a little tighter and she cannot understand
What she wants or why she wanders to that undiscovered land,
For the parties there are not at all the sort of thing she planned,
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's an Oxford man that listens and his heart is crying out
In the City as the sun sinks low;
For the barge, the eight, the Isis, and the coach's whoop and shout,
For the minute-gun, the counting and the long dishevelled rout,
For the howl along the tow-path and a fate that's still in doubt,
For a roughened oar to handle and a race to think about
In the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a labourer that listens to the voices of the dead
In the City as the sun sinks low;
And his hand begins to tremble and his face is rather red
As he sees a loafer watching him and—there he turns his head
And stares into the sunset where his April love is fled,
For he hears her softly singing and his lonely soul is led
Through the land where the dead dreams go.

There's an old and haggard demi-rep, it's ringing in her ears,
In the City as the sun sinks low;
With the wild and empty sorrow of the love that blights and sears,
Oh, and if she hurries onward, then be sure, be sure she hears,

Hears and bears the bitter burden of the unforgotten years,
And her laugh's a little harsher and her eyes are brimmed with tears
For the land where the dead dreams go.

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks low;
Though the music's only Verdi there's a world to make it sweet
Just as yonder yellow sunset where the earth and heaven meet
Mellows all the sooty City! Hark, a hundred thousand feet
Are marching on to glory through the poppies and the wheat
In the land where the dead dreams go.

So it's Jeremiah, Jeremiah,
What have you to say
When you meet the garland girls
Tripping on their way?

All around my gala hat
I wear a wreath of roses
(A long and lonely year it is
I've waited for the May!)
If any one should ask you,
The reason why I wear it is—
My own love, my true love is coming home to-day.

And it's buy a bunch of violets for the lady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in London!*)
Buy a bunch of violets for the lady;
While the sky burns blue above:

On the other side the street you'll find it shady
(*It's lilac-time in London; it's lilac-time in London!*)
But buy a bunch of violets for the lady,
And tell her she's your own true love.

There's a barrel-organ carolling across a golden street
In the City as the sun sinks glittering and slow;
And the music's not immortal; but the world has made it sweet
And enriched it with the harmonies that make a song complete
In the deeper heavens of music where the night and morning meet,
As it dies into the sunset-glow;
And it pulses through the pleasures of the City and the pain
That surround the singing organ like a large eternal light,
And they've given it a glory and a part to play again
In the Symphony that rules the day and night.

And there, as the music changes,
The song runs round again;
Once more it turns and ranges
Through all its joy and pain:
Dissects the common carnival
Of passions and regrets;
And the wheeling world remembers all
The wheeling song forgets.

Once more *La Traviata* sighs
Another sadder song:
Once more *Il Trovatore* cries
A tale of deeper wrong;
Once more the knights to battle go
With sword and shield and lance
Till once, once more, the shattered foe
Has whirled into—*a dance!*

Come down to Kew in lilac-time, in lilac-time, in lilac-time;
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)
And you shall wander hand in hand with Love in summer's wonderland,
Come down to Kew in lilac-time (it isn't far from London!)

LOVE'S CONFESSIONAL.

Ere the world begins to wake,
Ere the heart of heaven can break
Hear me now for my soul's sake.

Love, ah, though I cannot choose,
Now but speak; my lips refuse
Words, there is so much to lose,

Yet so much much more to win
Should you dare to enter in
This poor broken heart of sin.

I could trick you if I would:
Oh, the lies on which we stood
Firmly, still are holding good.

Now the bonds may all be riven,
And the heart you made your heaven
Seek the darkness, unforgiven.

Yes; when God seemed good to us,
Once, you dreamed me thus and thus,
Pure of soul and chivalrous,

Strong and steadfast, tried and true
Till I almost dreamed it, too,
Love, oh Love, for love of you.

Love has grown since then and proved
Earth from heaven less far removed
Than my soul from what you loved.

Ah; but now the mask must fall,
Heaven has too much power to appal
Ere I win or lose it all.

Hear me ere the hour goes by!
If the love be all a lie,
Win or lose it, what care I?

By the dreams of our delight,
By your love so pure and white,
You must hear me and requite.

Unto whom, oh love, as well,
Could a soul in torment tell
All the secret of its hell?

Not to God: the eternal sky
Looms too wide and deep and high
And might laugh contemptuously.

Not to friends: they would advise;
Or with comfort in their eyes
Wag their heads and sympathise.

Love with feet and hands that bleed,
Knows the one eternal need,
Knows it here, in dream and deed,

Low as in the dust we fall
With that wild eternal call
"Love, forgive us: that is all."

Oh, the life that love receives
When the lie no longer lives
And the Avenger, Death, forgives.

Death? It is the death that gains
More than glory through its pains,
Earth may pass: but heaven remains.

Ah, no, no! Christ, do not shrink
Now, upon the dreadful brink,
Stoop to Lethe, stoop and drink.

Ah, the long low sobbing moan,
Ah, the cruel face of stone,
Staring helpless and alone.

Ah, the hand that creeps to mine,
Ah, the dreams that still entwine
Closer round the dream divine;

Closer, as the darkness dies,
And the pity in thine eyes
Yearns like God through April skies.

Oh, I know that lifting head:
Now, love, kiss me: Time is dead:
All that Death can say is said.

Now the last great barriers fall,
Heaven has no more power to appal,
Love is all and all in all.

SONG.

WHAT is a smile to thee
More than a zephyr's trifling with a rose;
A momentary breath that comes and goes
Playing with thy sweet lips perpetually?
Yet more than every flower on earth that blows,
Even so much more, thy faintest smile to me.

What are thy tears to thee
More than the dews that on a violet bed
Dreamily sweeten the rich sweets they shed
At morning or at evening? Come and see,
My heart bleeds drop for drop, but mine are red;
For so much more thy tears are, sweet, to me.

What is my love to thee
More than the flattery women hold so dear,
A common flower to treasure half a year
Pressed in some book of casual memory?
And yet, as life is more than hope or fear,
Even so much more my love remains to me.

DE PROFUNDIS.

Thou who hast taken the dust of the earth and fashioned
Of thine own joy and pain
This body, with thine own love endowed and empassioned
Till it return again
Dust into dust, oh Thou who livest and reignest
To all Eternity,
Like as a father pitieth his children,
Pity Thou me.

Thou who hast made me an heir to the sins of the ages
With power to look above
And claim, if I will, thine agony for my wages,
Thy wages for my love;
To wash in the bitter streams of eternal anguish
That redden sky and sea,
Like as a father pitieth his children,
Pity Thou me!

Thou who hast given me the law and the will and the power,
The weakness and the worth,
The strength to struggle and conquer for an hour
And then sink back to the earth,

See, Lord, my heart was broken in that great darkness;
Lord Christ, wilt Thou not see?
Like as a father pitieth his children
Pity Thou me.

Thou who hast given me the wonder and the vision,
The dream and the desire;
Yet withered them root and branch ere their fruition,
Heaped dust upon my fire,
Given me the blinded eyes, the feet to wander
How far, oh God, from Thee,
Like as a father pitieth his children
Pity Thou me.

Thou who hast given me friends and the heart to wound them,
Even whom I loved the most;
Even when mine arms were yearning to go round them
My mouth could scoff and boast;
Or I was dumb, when all the soul of sorrow
Cried unto Love and Thee,
Like as a father pitieth his children
Pity Thou me.

Not for the seed of goodness idly cherished
With blind and secret tears;
Not for the frail ideal dreams that perished
With the dull lapse of years;
Be near me now; thy creature in its weakness
Can only cry to Thee—
Like as a father pitieth his children,
Pity Thou me.

Thou who hast given me love and again hast taken
The loved one from my side,
Who am all too weak; ah, why hast Thou forsaken
Me, not Thy Crucified,
Father, only Thy little one, not the Master
Of earth and sky and sea?
Like as a father pitieth his children,
Pity Thou me!

SONG.

I CAME to the doors of the House of Love
And knocked as the starry night went by;
And my true love cried "Who knocks?" and I said
"It is I."

And Love looked down from a lattice above
Where the roses were dry as the lips of the dead;
"There is not room in the House of Love
For you both," he said.

I plucked a leaf from the porch and crept
Away through a desert of scoffs and scorns
To a lonely place where I prayed and wept
And wove me a crown of thorns.

I came once more to the House of Love
And knocked, ah softly and wistfully,
And my true love cried "Who knocks?" and I said
"None now but thee."

And the great doors opened wide apart
And a voice rang out from a glory of light,
"Make room, make room for a faithful heart
In the House of Love, to-night."

IN THE CROWD.

Ah yes; Alphonse had seen in that hotel
So many lovers on their honeymoon;
But never such a pair as this. Monsieur
Seemed so well-formed, so sunny and so young;
And ah, how bright, how *piquante* was Madame.

Monsieur was quite her slave, too; you could see
Love was completely new to him: he flushed
With pride and pleasure if he had to stoop
A thousand times a day to tie the lace
On that provoking little shoe of hers;
And ah, no doubt, she loved Monsieur as well;
For they went out together every night
As happily as children going to spend
A penny at a fair. These Englishmen
In love are wonderful sweet simpletons!
We French are masters of a compliment;
We dice for hearts and roses, dreams and tears,
And smiling quite impartially admire
The dainty frills around a woman's feet
Much the same way as we admire her soul.
We can be passionate, too, and call on God;
Ah, yes; we can turn pale as death and tremble;

Take poisons in dramatic under-dose
Or fight a long long duel; we do not shrink;
No; no; for sometimes accidentally
Our realism kills us or our friends,
And then our courts acquit us, for they know
How unintentional it was. But these
Athletic Englishmen in love are boys
Let loose from school. They mean each word they say!

Well, in this room—they were not very rich,
And so they took the smallest room we had—
Monsieur would sit and watch her sweet bright eyes
Or hold her hand and wonder if it all
Would vanish like a dream: it was too good,
Too beautiful a story to be true.
He had not won her easily: he seemed
Hardly to understand she was his own.
He used to sit and watch her when she read
Or played at painting in the lamplight here;
Ah, heaven! Lamplight and water-colours, eh?
But he, he thought, even when the daylight came,
They were the loveliest pictures in the world.

And every day they went to see the sights,
St Cloud, Versailles, and Notre Dame; and all
For him at least was consecrated ground;
She brought a halo with her, and when they heard
The choirs in Catholic churches, why, her face
Made him forget he was a Protestant,
Made him afraid almost to feel his heart
Uplift to God like this, by alien prayers.

Was it not simple? Yes, like little children,
They hardly understood the wickedness
That passed them in the streets: they did not know
How dark a place this Paris is at best.

My God; they had decided to return
Home—think of it! When Alphonse came and said
It would be such a pity for Madame
To miss the illuminations and the *fête*
Of two nights later; so, although Monsieur
Was anxious to return and show how right
Her people were to trust the girl to him—
Her mother had felt some qualms, no doubt, he seemed
So young; besides, he was a second son—
And now that she was blossoming like a flower
He was most eager to return and show
His worthiness of that miraculous trust,
He was so proud of her fresh loveliness
And perfect bloom, so proud—just at the last
They changed their plans: and here my poor Alphonse
Grows white and his mouth twitches, for he thinks,
As we poor helpless men are prone to think,
He was responsible; and he will wax
Diffuse in explanation, and perhaps
Piteous in his excitement; so that here
We turn to other sources for our tale.

Well, they remained, of course, to see the *fête;*
And they went out that night, just as before.
But, first, Monsieur most wisely made Madame
Change her thin muslin for a warmer gown
Because he thought that later she might feel
Cold! He was, ah so careful! Was not this

Bitter, their blindness? Yes; you have not heard
The story yet; but when you have heard all
You should return to careless words like these
And wonder, ay, shed tears to think of them.

First, laugh a while! His care had only caused
A little quarrel, ending in a kiss
When he had won his way. Then they went out
Just like two happy children going to spend
A penny at a fair.

They say he hired
A carriage and they drove contentedly
Down the long vistas lit with coloured lamps,
Vistas enwreathed and fluttering with flags,
Vistas of vaporous roses, vistas of pearl
Opal and violet vanishing ever in quest
Of the Unknown Way, while overhead the moon
Weary and white awoke, a phantom flower
In phantom fields of cloud, where fiery fountains,
O'er seas of sickly faces and the long
Slow deep contented "Ah," hissed up in gold,
Curled over and softly broke in tiny stars
Of rose and green that faded as the quiet
Report reached earth. Still on and on they drove,
Happily dreaming, hand secure in hand,
No doubt, beneath the rug; on through great squares
Netted and webbed with glory and colour and gloom
To lose themselves in Wonderland, and on,
Still on, content if they might only ride,
As that poor lover in the poem wished,
Together, thus, through all Eternity.

Once, where the crowds were densest, as they drove,
They saw a little troop of soldiers pass,
And heard from side to side of the seething square
A sullen growl thicken as in the throat
Of a chained wild beast; for the army was not held
In popular favour; and on every side
Gamins, with revolutionary hair
And reckless eyes chanted the *Marseillaise.*

At last the driver stopped; for carriages
Were not allowed, after a certain hour.
Madame was eager to return on foot
Although Monsieur protested, and this caused
Another little quarrel; till she said
How cold she was, and Monsieur said with pride
How wise he was; for he had made her change
Her muslin for a warmer woollen gown
Before they started. So she won her way;
And they returned through the *Champs Elysées*
Just like two little children.
A big crowd
Was gathering there; and, just before they reached
The further side, another crowd streamed down
To meet them and, Monsieur shielding Madame
As well as possible, the two were borne
Into the thick of it.
They heard a scream
Of a woman in the whirling crush; and then
Suddenly through the *Arc de Triomphe* came
A square of nodding plumes; and a great growl
Surged round the soldiers and rolled muttering
Across the mighty square. Then a wild shout
Shattered the foul air savagely: the horses

Reared and plunged as a thousand frantic hands
Were raised to pluck the soldiers from their seats.
There came a flash of swords, a volley of stones,
Howls, shrieks and curses, then one huge blind rush
Of the maddened crowd against the tossing plumes,
And in the midst, the boy and his child-wife
Were whirled along together: his strong arms
Enfolded her; but suddenly the crowd
Stopped and the crush grew fiercer; her pale face
Cried to him, "Ah, forgive me, Lionel,
I am fainting," and at once the hideous tales
Of women crushed to death and corpses borne
Upright, as if alive, hither and thither,
By close-packed mobs, flashed through his brain in one
Spasm of agony: he stared desperately
Around him, pleading, cursing in impotence,
And straining every muscle till great drops
Of sweat rolled down his whitening face. At last,
"Edith," he said, "when the crowd moves again
The crush will lessen for a moment. Then,
I must stoop down. Do you hear me? You must slip
Behind me; put your arms around my neck;
And I will lift you up above the crush;
Do not be frightened, Edith." Then the crowd
Moved, and he cried to her, "Edith, quickly, now!"
And he stooped: a moment passed: a wild fear flashed
Through all his blood, "God, is she hesitating?"
Then two warm little hands embraced his neck,
And he rose up with his burden, and the crowd
Whirled him hither and thither, and he stumbled
On and still on, with eyes closed and white lips,
Praying: a clenched fist struck him in the face
And his mouth bled, and once he fell on his knees

And by the miracle of the hideous thought
That smote him rose again and staggered on,
On, on for ever in a ghastly dream,
While overhead the fires of artifice
Rose quietly among the phantom clouds
And curled and broke in stars of rose and green
That mocked the world with cynical gaiety,
Mocked it with brilliant evanescent joy,
Mocked it with falsely glittering stars of love.
"Life, life," they seemed to cackle over his head,
"Life, life, is but a battle with a crowd
A battle on the very ground that fools
Have named their *Champs Elysées;* of whose bliss
The only signs that Time affords are these
Perpetual foolish murmurs that applaud
The rockets. Blindlier still he staggered on
And blindlier, till at last it seemed he too
Could do no more, even for that sacred load.
He sickened and dropped forward: only the crush
Could keep him upright now: his head sank down
Like a dead man's; then all at once he felt
There was a space: the crowd melted: a voice
Rang in his ears, "Courage, Monsieur": he drank
Free air and fell, prone on his face, despite
The kindly hand, and whispered "Ah, thank God."

But, when he slowly turned, as a man turns
In old age to his God, to look on her,
His burden, he shrieked aloud: Who, who was this?
This was not Edith! This poor painted girl,
This woman of the streets! Her feathers nodded
Thankfully over him: then with a whine
She slunk away.

How many hours he walked,
Or where he went in search of her, God knows;
But when, a whole day later, he returned
Here to their little room and sat among
Her paintings, waiting, listening for the step
That never came, Alphonse went out to look
Where Lionel had never dared to dream
Of looking for his Edith; Alphonse went
And recognised her, and returned and gave him
One little glove, all cut and stained, but still
Sweet with her hand.
If he could only weep,
They thought; but he sat staring at it, white
And tearless; near him stood a box of hers,
A box that she had packed three nights ago
With little treasures, programmes, pictures, books
She meant to keep in memory of that month
For sentimental purposes. The lid
Was labelled and addressed in her own hand
To her new English home.

THE SWEET O' THE YEAR.

Winds that blow across the sea,
Does my love remember me?

When the world is frozen hard as a stone
And the wind blows barren and cold,
I can wander my weary ways alone
And dream that my tale is told,
My dear,
And dream that my tale is told.

But when the blossoms begin to peer,
And the birds to build and sing,
When Love comes in with the sweet o' the year
How should I bear the Spring,
My dear,
How should I bear the Spring?

For though the May is come again and Hope is turning home again,
She only comes to roam again and vanish like a breath;
Her wings are far too strong for us, they never tarry long for us;
She'll sing one little song for us, and then—her name is Death.

Dew-drenched dog-rose, meadow-sweet and clover,
Moon like a primrose, burning o'er the sea,
Path of purple shadow
Winding through the meadow,
Do you hear a distant footstep now the winter time is over,
For the clover and the wild thyme are busy with the bee;
Ah, listen now and whisper if my love remembers me!

Winds that blow across the sea,
Does my love remember me?

For ah, if my love remembers me
Surely his heart would break to see
The wonderful little leaves again
Bursting out on the trysting-tree.

Was it only a year of rose and snow,
Sun and rainbow, blossom and rain;
Love, was it only a year ago,
Or an æon of infinite pain?

No; it was only a year ago,
And ah, what lovers were we!
For the world was alight with the rosy glow
Of heaven for him and me,
My dear,
Heaven for him and me.

And now the summer's here again, she'll bring the buried year again
In dreams at dawn so near again, his hand shall touch my hand;
Her laugh 'll wake me cheerily to greet him, then, oh, drearily
The days 'll teach me wearily at last to understand.

Crowds of yellow primrose all along the meadows,
Bluebell and clover busy with the bee,
Violets and lilies,
And yellow daffodillies,
As they dance amid the bracken with their green and golden shadows,
While the meadow-sweet is nodding to the daisies on the lea,
Will they listen, will they whisper, if my love remembers me?

Winds that blow across the sea,
Does my love remember me?

If God would let me choose this night
One gift from out the grave,
One dear dead day in a bygone May
Is all that I should crave.

But when once more in the waning light
Its dreams were overworn,
No day of pain should break again,
That night should know no morn,
My dear,
That night should know no morn.

For though the summer's come again and Hope is turning home again,
She only comes to roam again and vanish like a breath.

Winds that blow across the sea,
Does my love remember me?

Her wings are far too strong for us, they never tarry long for us;
She'll sing one little song for us, and then—her name is Death.

Dew-drenched dog-rose, meadow-sweet and clover,
Moon like a primrose, burning o'er the sea;
Path of violet shadow
Winding through the meadow,
Laughing valley lilies,
And yellow daffodillies,
Do you hear a distant footstep now the winter-time is over?
For the clover and the wild thyme are busy with the bee;
Ah, listen now and whisper if my love remembers me.

Winds that blow across the sea,
Does my love remember me?

THE DWARF'S TRAGEDY.

I.

It was a King that rode to hunt upon a morn of May,
And deep within the greenwood he found himself alone;
And while the sounds of horse and hound were dying far away,
He happened on a little Dwarf that sat upon a stone:

His cap was red as a fox-glove bell,
He held a fern in his hand;
For the Dwarf was the King of a dreamland dell
And a prince of Fairyland.

And the King upon his moon-white steed grew quieter than the moon
That glimmered on the greenwood from out the rosy sky;
And the Dwarf peered up and whispered *Hush!* and hummed a drowsy tune,
And like a dream or like a cloud the world went drifting by:

For the Dwarf was listening to a rhyme
The breeze had taught the flowers;
And the blue-bell chime of eternal time
That speeds the dreamland hours.

And the King forgot his palace, forgot his crown and throne;
And all the world around him was a sea of light and joy,
Where green boughs and wild-flowers and brooks in undertone
Took up the soul's old antiphone of song too sweet to cloy:

And the little Dwarf sat still and dreamed
How knights with sword and helm
Like green and golden beetles gleamed
Across his fairy realm.

A blackbird came to peep at him with eyes of glistening dew,
A rabbit lolloped down the glade and played around his feet,
A linnet sang *The world's a dream; but every dream is true;*
And *True, true, true,* the roses bade their hidden birds repeat:

His cap was red as a fox-glove bell,
He held a fern in his hand;
For he was the King of a dreamland dell
And a prince of Fairyland.

II.

Holla! Holla! Holla! Ho! a cry across the stillness broke:
Holla! Holla! Holla! Ho! the Dwarf leapt up: the King awoke!
And crashing through the flowers and fern a hundred hoofs beat heavy and blunt,
And up, around the King and Dwarf, they reined, amazed, the hunt!

Ah! ha! they laughed, *Ah! ha! ha! ha!* and the little Dwarf laughed too;
But the good green boughs of the wild-wood sighed against the rose-rimmed blue;

For the King's chief huntsman laughed too loud, *Let us take him away to the court;*
And he lifted the Dwarf to his saddle-bow, *Our jest for to-night: good sport!*

And so to the palace they came, and at night, when laughter and wine flowed free,
The Dwarf tripped out to caper and sing, with a chuckle of elvish glee:
And he shook his quaint little shaggy poll and he twisted his queer little face,
And he kept the revel alive all night with the light of his last grimace.

And the Princess laughed till the Dwarf looked up at the tears in her wonderful eyes,
And he smiled and he bowed with his hand on his heart, and then, as a child praised tries
To better his best, he capered again till he made her soft sides ache;
Ay: he danced as he never had danced before, and all for the Princess' sake.

"Oh! oh!" she said, "he jumps like a frog; I have never seen anything half
So funny and ugly; oh dear, oh dear;" and the whole court echoed her laugh;
And he thought that they laughed for delight as he laughed when the skies and the streams were blue;
How should he know he was ugly at all? So the queer little Dwarf laughed, too.

Then, dazed and amazed, through the roar of the court he saw Her
beckon him nigh,
And he crept with a glimmer of pride on his face and a sharp little
woodland cry
Of wonder and fear and wild delight deep down in his heart, as close
Her face bent down to his quivering face and she pinned on his
breast—a rose.

III.

Roses, roses all around him : roses in her laughing face,
Roses in the dazzling wine-cups drained in honour to the chase ;
Roses where the rosy jewels burned on snowy breast and brow,
Roses as he groped out blindly through the feast of rose and snow.

Out into the moonlit garden where ten thousand roses grew
Tripped the hideous little monster through the gloom of rose and
blue ;
Showed his rose to all the thousands, laughed and sang in elvish glee :
"This must be the queen of roses, for the Princess gave it me."

Like a little living gargoyle through the passion-flowers he crept
Towards the glimmering marble basin where like fire the fountains
leapt,
Saw the moths with flower-dust laden flutter towards the flashing rain,
Tried to scare them from their fate, and found the tiny task was vain.

Then through many a rose-hung alley lit by many a golden star
On and on he wandered, hearing, here and there, a low guitar
Breathing to some open casement songs that touched his eyes with
light,
Songs that plucked at all his heart-strings in the silence of the night.

She and I will go together; hark! the music seems to say
There are shores beyond the sunset; yes; and cities far away;
Yes; and angel whispers floating hither o'er the sapphire sea:
This must be the queen of roses, for the Princess gave it me.

IV.

And red as a rose the dawn broke, over the palace towers,
As clasping his Rose of roses, he slept in the shade of the flowers
At the foot of a marble daïs, where cold as the foam of the sea,
Venus aglow with the rose-flush dreamed of Eternity.

And the manikin dreamed—I will show her—ah, but she will not go
Perhaps, for her palace is marble; but then there is much to show
Even there, even there, in my forest, in my house, not made with hands,
How proud I shall be to show her!—she is one that understands.

I will make her a robe of fawn-skin, I will weave her a crown of flowers,
She shall hear the chime of the blue-bells that peal the dreamland hours,
I will bring her fruits and berries and honey, and she shall eat,
And then, at night, in the star-shine, she will let me sleep at her feet.

She shall sing, he murmured, the music the fairies bring from the sky,
She shall learn to chat as a sister with blossom and butterfly,
She shall watch the mystical dreamer that under the rose-leaf swings
In a hammock of silken slumber waiting for wonderful wings.

All that I kept and cherished, my dreams, my beautiful dreams,
Hidden in fern-clad hollows, litten with rainbow gleams,
Flung by the fairy cataracts over the spray of the white
Dancing fragrant dog-rose, my dreams of a lost delight;

Mystical strange old secrets, far, so far above
All that the lips can whisper, all that the heart can love, . . .
Oh, words that can never be spoken, dreams that I never could show
To any but one that loved me, she too, she too must know!

My knights in golden armour, my knights in green and gold,
How we shall watch them together! What tales there are to be told,
In my forests of fairy blossom, in my house not made with hands;
How proud I shall be to tell her!—she is one that understands.

V.

Ah! he woke; and towards the palace wandered slowly once again;
On his heart the Rose of roses glimmered like a dream of pain:
O'er the glowing marble terrace, like a fragment of the night
Crept he, and the great white portals ached upon his yearning sight.

Marble! Were the red ten thousand murmuring that he dared to
touch
Love's domain with his brown foot-soles, what if he should stain or
smutch
Something that the Princess treasured? and the peacock's flaming
dyes
Made him feel so brown and tattered: ah, he shrank from those
great eyes!

On through many a gorgeous archway lit with shields of lustrous gloom,
On past many a pictured arras, many a rich enchanted room:
She and I will go together! All at once, it seemed there crept
Something through his tears to meet him, some strange thing that moaned and wept;

Something ugly from behind that lustrous glass upon the wall;
On its heart it clasped a rose, a red rose just about to fall;
Yes; so like his queen of roses that the Dwarf shrank back in fear;
And the monster seemed to mock him! Was it but a shadow there?

Was it echo? Was it magic? See, the Dwarf crept back again,
And the monster came to meet him with grey twisted lips of pain:

Out—out—out—into the garden, where the roses fluttered and beat,
Rushed he to the cold white statue, and fell, broken, at her feet.

And his face grew grey and greyer as the birds grew wild with mirth,
And the roses heard him whisper with his lips against the earth,
Where the cold white Aphrodite dreamed of Love's immortal sea,
Still, my rose is queen of roses, for the Princess gave it me.

VI.

Ah! ha! they laughed; *Ah! ha! ha! ha!* but the huntsman laughed too loud,
As all aglow with purple and gold up strutted the courtly crowd;
"Come, come, little monster, and dance, ha! ha!" and the Princess piped, "Oh dear;
He is fast asleep, with a rose on his breast! He has stolen the rose, I fear!"

"Come, come, little monster, and dance, ha! ha!" and one with a thrust of his foot
Stirred him: the grey little face fell back on the courtier's broidered boot:
"He has fainted away!" the Princess cried; but the chamberlain shook his head
As he felt the poor little pigeon-breast, "Ah no! Princess, he is dead."

VII.

So the gardeners carried him far away, beneath the golden moon
That glimmered on the greenwood from out the rosy sky,
And they left him in a twilit glade that breathed a drowsy tune,
As like a cloud or like a dream the world went drifting by;
A blackbird came to look at him with eyes of glistening dew,
A rabbit lolloped down the glade and played around his feet:
A linnet sang "The world's a dream; but every dream is true;"
And "True, true, true," the roses bade their hidden birds repeat.

His cap was red as a fox-glove bell,
He held a fern in his hand;
For he was the King of a dreamland dell
And a prince of Fairyland.

THE LAST BATTLE.

KINGS of the earth, Kings of the earth, the trumpet rings for warning,
And like the golden swords that ray from out the setting sun
The shout goes out o' the trumpet mouth across the hills of morning,
Wake; for the last great battle dawns and all the wars are done.

Now all the plains of Europe smoke with marching hooves of thunder,
And through each ragged mountain-gorge the guns begin to gleam;
And round a hundred cities where the women watch and wonder,
The tramp of passing armies aches and faints into a dream.

The King of Ind is drawing nigh: a hundred leagues are clouded
Along his loud earth-shaking march from east to western sea:
The King o' the Setting Sun is here and all the seas are shrouded
With sails that carry half the world to front Eternity.

Soon shall the darkness roll around the grappling of the nations,
A darkness lit with deadly gleams of blood and steel and fire;
Soon shall the last great pæan of earth's war-worn generations
Roar through the thunder-clouded air round War's red funeral pyre.

But here defeat and victory are both allied with heaven,
The enfolding sky makes every foe the centre of her dome,
Each fights for God and his own right, and unto each is given
The right to find the heart of heaven where'er he finds his home.

Oh, who shall win, and who shall lose, and who shall take the glory
Here at the meeting of the roads, where every cause is right?
Oh, who shall live, and who shall die, and who shall tell the story?
Each strikes for faith and fatherland in that immortal fight.

High on the grey old hills of Time the last immortal rally,
Under the storm of the last great tattered flag, shall laugh to see
The blood of Armageddon roll from every smoking valley,
Shall laugh aloud, then rush on death for God and chivalry.

Kings of the earth, Kings of the earth, oh, which of you then shall inherit
The Kingdom, the Power and the Glory? for the world's old light grows dim
And the cry of you all goes up all night to the dark enfolding Spirit,
Each of you fights for God and home; but God, ah, what of Him?

THE PARADOX.

"I Am that I Am."

I.

All that is broken shall be mended;
All that is lost shall be found;
I will bind up every wound
When that which is begun shall be ended;
Not peace I brought among you but a sword
To divide the night from the day;
When I sent My worlds forth in their battle-array
To die and to live,
To give and to receive,
Saith the Lord.

II.

Of old time they said none is good save our God;
But ye that have seen how the ages have shrunk from my rod,
And how red is the wine-press wherein at my bidding they trod,
Have answered and said that with Eden I fashioned the snake,
That I mould you of clay for a moment, then mar you and break,
And there is none evil but I, the supreme Evil, God.

Lo, I say unto both, I am neither;
But greater than either;
For meeting and mingling in Me they become neither evil nor good;
Their cycle is rounded: they know neither hunger nor food;
They need neither sickle nor seed-time, nor root nor fruit,
They are ultimate, infinite, absolute.
Therefore I say unto all that have sinned,
East and West and South and North
The wings of my measureless love go forth
To cover you all: they are free as the wings of the wind.

III.

Consider the troubled waters of the sea
Which never rest;
As the wandering waves are ye;
Yet assuaged and appeased and forgiven,
As the seas are gathered together under the infinite glory of heaven,
I gather you all to my breast.
But the sins and the creeds and the sorrows that trouble the sea
Relapse and subside,
Chiming like chords in a world-wide symphony
As they cease to chide;
For they break and they are broken of sound and hue,
And they meet and they murmur and they mingle anew,
Interweaving, intervolving, like waves: they have no stay:
They are all made as one with the deep, when they sink and are vanished away;
Yea, all is toned at a turn of the tide
To a calm and golden harmony;

But I—shall I wonder or greatly care,
For their depth or their height?
Shall it be more than a song in my sight
How many wandering waves there were,
Or how many colours and changes of light?
It is your eyes that see
And take heed of these things: they were fashioned for you, not for Me.

IV.

With the stars and the clouds I have clothed Myself here for your eyes
To behold That which Is. I have set forth the strength of the skies
As one draweth a picture before you to make your hearts wise;
That the infinite souls I have fashioned may know as I know,
Visibly revealed
In the flowers of the field,
Yea, declared by the stars in their courses, the tides in their flow,
And the clash of the world's wide battle as it sways to and fro,
Flashing forth as a flame
The unnameable Name,
The ineffable Word,
I am the Lord.

V.

I am the End to which the whole world strives:
Therefore are ye girdled with a wild desire and shod
With sorrow; for among you all no soul
Shall ever cease or sleep or reach its goal
Of union and communion with the Whole,
Or rest content with less than being God.

Still, as unending asymptotes, your lives
In all their myriad wandering ways
Approach Me with the progress of the golden days;
Approach Me; for my love contrives
That ye should have the glory of this
For ever; yea, that life should blend
With life and only vanish away
From day to wider wealthier day,
Like still increasing spheres of light that melt and merge in wider spheres
Even as the infinitude of hours melts in the infinitude of years.
Each new delight of sense,
Each hope, each love, each fear,
Widens, relumes and recreates each sphere,
From a new ring and nimbus of pre-eminence.
I am the Sphere without circumference:
I only and for ever comprehend
All others that within me meet and blend.
Death is but the blinding kiss
Of two finite infinities;
Two finite infinite orbs
The splendour of the greater of which absorbs
The less, though both like Love have no beginning and no end.

VI.

Therefore is Love's own breath
Like Knowledge, a continual death;
And all his laughter and kisses and tears,
And woven wiles of peace and strife,
That ever widen thus your temporal spheres,
Are making of the memory of your former years
A very death in life.

VII.

I am that I am;
Ye are evil and good;
With colour and glory and story and song ye are fed as with food:
The cold and the heat,
The bitter and the sweet,
The calm and the tempest fulfil my Word;
Yet will ye complain of my two-edged sword
That has fashioned the finite and mortal and given you the sweetness of strife,
The blackness and whiteness,
The darkness and brightness,
Which sever your souls from the formless and void and hold you fast-fettered to life?

VIII.

Behold now, is Life not good?
Yea, is it not also much more than the food;
More than the raiment, more than the breath?
Yet Strife is its name!
Say, which will ye cast out first from the furnace, the fuel or the flame?
Would ye all be as I am; and know neither evil nor good; neither life; neither death;
Or mix with the void and the formless till all were as one and the same?

IX.

I am that I am; the Container of all things: kneel, lift up your hands
To the high Consummation of good and of evil which none understands;

The divine Paradox, the ineffable Word, in whose light the poor souls
that ye trod
Underfoot as too vile for their fellows are at terrible union with God!
Am I not over both evil and good,
The righteous man and the shedder of blood?
Shall I save or slay?
I am neither the night nor the day,
Saith the Lord.
Judge not, oh ye that are round my footstool, judge not, ere the
hour be born
That shall laugh you also to scorn.

X.

Ah, yet I say unto all that have sinned,
East and West and South and North
The wings of my measureless love go forth
To cover you all: they are free as the wings of the wind.

XI.

But one thing is needful; and ye shall be true
To yourselves and the goal and the God that ye seek;
Yea, the day and the night shall requite it to you
If ye love one another, if your love be not weak.

XII.

Since I sent out my worlds in their battle-array
To die and to live,
To give and to receive,

Not peace, not peace, I have brought among you but a sword,
To divide the night from the day,
Saith the Lord;
Yet all that is broken shall be mended,
And all that is lost shall be found,
I will bind up every wound,
When that which is begun shall be ended.

THE PROGRESS OF LOVE

A Lyrical Symphony

THE PROGRESS OF LOVE.

I.

In other worlds I loved you, long ago:
  Love that hath no beginning hath no end:
The woodbine whispers, low and sweet and low,
In other worlds I loved you, long ago;
The firwoods murmur and the sea-waves know
  The message that the setting sun shall send;
In other worlds I loved you, long ago:
  Love that hath no beginning hath no end.

II.

And God sighed in the sunset; and the sea
  Chanted the soft recessional of Time
Against the golden shores of mystery;

And ever as that long low change and chime
  With one slow sob of molten music yearned
Westward, it seemed as if the Love sublime

Almost uttered itself, where the waves burned
  In little flower-soft flames of rose and green
That woke to seaward, while the tides returned

Rising and falling, ruffled and serene,
With all the mirrored tints of heaven above
Shimmering through their mystic myriad sheen.

As a dove's burnished breast throbbing with love
Swells and subsides to call her soft-eyed mate
Home through the rosy gloom of glen or grove,

So when the greenwood noon was growing late
The sea called softly through the waste of years,
Called to the star that still can consecrate

The holy golden haze of human tears
Which tinges every sunset with our grief
Until the perfect Paraclete appears.

Ah, the long sigh that yields the world relief
Rose and relapsed across Eternity,
Making a joy of sorrows that are brief,

As, o'er the bright enchantment of the sea,
Facing the towers of that old City of Pain
Which stands upon the shores of mystery

And frowns across the immeasurable main,
Venus among her cloudy sunset flowers
Woke; and earth melted into heaven again.

For even the City's immemorial towers
Were tinted into secret tone and time,
Like old forgotten tombs that age embowers

With muffling roses and with mossy rime
  Until they seem no monument of ours,
But one more note in earth's accordant chime.

Oh Love, Love, Love, all dreams, desires and powers,
  Were but as chords of that ineffable psalm;
And all the long blue lapse of summer hours,

And all the breathing sunset's golden balm
  By that æonian sorrow were resolved
As dew into the music's infinite calm,

Through which the suns and moons and stars revolved
  According to the song's divine decree,
Till Time was but a tide of intervolved

And interweaving worlds of melody;
  In other worlds I loved you, long ago,—
The angelic citoles fainted o'er the sea;

And seraph citerns answered, sweet and low,
  From where the sunset and the moonrise blend,—
In other worlds I loved you, long ago;

Love that hath no beginning hath no end;
  Oh Love, Love, Love, the bitter City of Pain
Bidding the golden echoes westward wend,

Chimed in accordant undertone again:
  Though every grey old tower rose like a tomb
To mock the glory of the shoreless main

They could but strike such discords as illume
The music with strange gleams of utter light
And hallow all the valley's rosy gloom.

And there, though greyly sinking out of sight
Before the wonders of the sky and sea,
Back through the valley, back into the night,

While mystery melted into mystery,
The City still rebuffed the far sweet West
That dimmed her sorrows with infinity;

Yet sometimes yearning o'er the sea's bright breast
To that remote Avilion would she gaze
Where all lost loves and weary warriors rest.

Then she remembered, through that golden haze,
(Oh faint as flowers the rose-white waves resound)
Her Arthur whom she loved in the dead days,

And how he sailed to heal him of his wound,
And how he lives and reigns eternally
Where now that unknown love is throned and crowned

Who laid his bleeding head against her knee
And loosed the bitter breast-plate and unbound
His casque and brought him strangely o'er the sea,

And how she reigns beside him on that shore
For ever (Yrma, queen, bend down to me)
And they twain have no sorrow any more.

III.

They have forgotten all that vanished away
When life's dark night died into death's bright day;
They have forgotten all except the gleam
Of light when once he kissed her in a dream
Once on the lips and once upon the brow
In the white orb of God's transcendent Now;
And even then he knew that, long before,
Their eyes had met upon some distant shore;
Yea; that most lonely and immortal face
Which dwells beyond the dreams of time and space
Bowed down to him from out the happy place
And whispered to him, low and sweet and low
In other worlds I loved you long ago;
And then he knew his love could never die
Because his queen was throned beyond the sky
And called him to his own immortal sphere
Forgetting Launcelot and Guinevere.

So Yrma reigns with Arthur, and they know
They loved on earth a million years ago;
And watched the sea-waves wistfully westward wend;
And heard a voice whispering in their flow,
And calling through the silent sunset glow,
Love that hath no beginning hath no end.

IV.

It was about the dawn of day
I heard Etain and Anwyl say
The waving ferns are a fairy forest
It is time, it is time to wander away;

For the dew is bright on the heather bells,
And the breeze in the clover sways and swells,
  As the waves on the blue sea wake and wander,
Over and under the braes and dells.

She was eight years old that day,
Full of laughter and play;
  Eight years old and Anwyl nine,—
Two young lovers were they.

Two young lovers were they,
  Born in the City of Pain;
There was never a song in the world so gay
  As the song of the child, Etain;

There was never a laugh so sweet
  With the ripple of fairy bells,
And never a fairy foot so fleet
  Dancing down the woodland dells!

She was eight years old that day,
Two young lovers were they.

There was never a sea of mystical gleams
  Glooming under enchanted skies
Deep as the dark miraculous dreams
  In Anwyl's haunted eyes.

There was never a glory of light
  Around the carolling lark
As Etain's eyes were brave and bright
  To daunt the coming dark.

Two young lovers were they
  Born in the City of Pain;
There was never a song in the world so gay
  As the song of the child, Etain;

Blithe as the wind in the trees,
  Blithe as the bird on the bough,
Blithe as the bees in the sweet Heart's-ease
  Where Love lies bleeding now.

v.

And God sighed in the sunset; and the sea
  Forgot her sorrow, and all the breathless West
Grew quiet as the blue tranquillity

That clad the broken mountain's brilliant breast,
  Over the City, with deep heather-bloom
Heaving from crag to crag in sweet unrest,

A sea of dim rich colour and warm perfume
  Whose billows rocked the drowsy honey-bee
Among the golden isles of gorse and broom

Like some enchanted ancient argosy
  Drunkenly blundering over seas of dream
Past unimagined isles of mystery,

Over whose yellow sands the soft waves cream,
  And sunbeams float and toss across the bare
Rose-white arms and perilous breasts that gleam

Where sirens wind their glossy golden hair;
  Oh, miles on miles, the honeyed heather-bloom
Heaving its purple through the high bright air

Rolled a silent glory of gleam and gloom
  From mossy crag to crag and crest to crest
Untroubled by the valley's depth of doom.

The hawk dropped down into the pine-forest
  And, far below, the lavrock ruffled her wings
Blossomwise over her winsome secret nest.

Then suddenly, softly, as when a fairy sings
  Out of the heart of a rose in the heart of the fern,
Or in the floating starlight faintly rings

The frail blue hare-bells—turn again, and turn,
  Under and over, the silvery crescents cry
To where the crimson fox-glove belfries burn

And with a deeper softer peal reply,
  There came a ripple of music through the roses
That rustled on the dimmest rim of sky

Where many a frame of fretted leaves encloses
  For lovers wandering in the fern-wet wood
An arch of summer sea that softly dozes

As if all mysteries were understood:
  Yrma, my queen, what love could understand
That faint sweet music, *God saith all is good,*

As those two children, hand in sunburnt hand,
Over the blithe blue hills and far away
Wandered into their own green fairyland?

VI.

For the song is lost that shook the dew
Where the wild musk-roses glisten,
When the sunset dreamed that a dream was true
And the birds were hushed to listen.

The song is lost that shook the night
With wings of richer fire,
When the years had touched their eyes with light
And their souls with a new desire;

And the new delight of the strange old story
Burned in the flower-soft skies,
And nine more years with a darker glory
Had deepened the light of her eyes;

But lost, oh more than lost the song
That shook the rose to tears,
As hand in hand they danced along
Through childhood's everlasting years.

"Oh, Love has wings," the linnet sings;
But the dead return no more, no more;
And the sea is breaking its old grey heart
Against the golden shore.

She was eight years old that day,
Two young lovers were they.

If every song as they danced along
  Paused on the springing spray;
Is there never a bird in the wide greenwood
  Will hush its heart to-day?

There's never a leaf with dew impearled
  To make their pathway sweet,
And never a blossom in all the world
  That knows the kiss of their feet.

No light to-night declares the word
  That thrilled the blossomed bough,
And stilled the happy singing bird
  That none can silence now.

The weary nightingale may sob
  With her bleeding breast against a thorn,
And the wild white rose with every throb
  Grow red as the laugh of morn;

With wings outspread she sinks her head
  But Love returns no more, no more;
And the sea is breaking its old grey heart
  Against the golden shore.

Born in the City of Pain;
  Ah, who knows, who knows
When Death shall turn to delight again
  Or a wound to a red red rose?

Eight years old that day,
Full of laughter and play;
  Eight years old and Anwyl nine,—
Two young lovers were they.

VII.

And down the scented heather-drowsy hills
The bare-foot children wandered, hand in hand,
And paddled through the laughing silver rills
In quest of fairyland;
And in each little sunburnt hand a spray,
A purple fox-glove bell-branch lightly swung,
And Anwyl told Etain how, far away,
One day he wandered through the dreamland dells
And watched the moonlit fairies as they sung
And tolled the fox-glove bells;
And oh, how sweetly, sweetly to and fro
The fragrance of the music reeled and rung
Under the loaded boughs of starry May.

And God sighed in the sunset, and the sea
Grew quieter than the hills: the mystery
Of ocean, earth and sky was like a word
Uttered, but all unheard,
Uttered by every wave and cloud and leaf
With all the immortal glory of mortal grief;
And every wave that broke its heart of gold
In music on the rainbow-dazzled shore
Seemed telling, strangely telling, evermore
A story that must still remain untold.

Oh, *Once upon a time*, and o'er and o'er
As aye the *Happy ever after* came
The enchanted waves lavished their faery lore

And tossed a foam-bow and a rosy flame
Around the whispers of the creaming foam,
Till the old rapture with the new sweet name

Through all the old romance began to roam,
And Anwyl, gazing out across the sea,
Dreamed that he heard the distance whisper "Come."

"Etain," he murmured softly and wistfully,
With the soul's wakening wonder in his eyes,
"Is it not strange to think that there can be

"No end for ever and ever to those skies,
No shore beyond, or if there be a shore
Still without end the world beyond it lies;

"Think; think; Etain;" and all his faery lore
Mixed with the faith that brought all gods to birth,
And sees new heavens transcend for evermore

The poor impossibilities of earth;
But Etain only laughed: the world to her
Was one sweet smile of very present mirth:

Its flowers were only flowers, common or rare;
Her soul was like a little garden closed
By rose-clad walls, a place of southern air

Islanded from the Mystery that reposed
Its vast and brooding wings on that abyss
Through which like little clouds that dreamed and dozed

The thoughts of Anwyl wandered toward some bliss
Unknown, unfathomed, far, how far away,
Where God has gathered all the eternities
Into strange heavens, beyond the night and day.

VIII.

And over the rolling golden bay,
In the funeral pomp of the dying day,
  The bell of Time was wistfully tolling
A million million years away;

And over the heather-drowsy hill
Where the burdened bees were buzzing still,
  The two little sun-bright barefoot children
Wandered down at the flowers' own will;

For still as the bell in the sunset tolled,
The meadow-sweet and the mary-gold
  And the purple orchis kissed their ankles
And lured them over the listening wold.

And the feathery billows of blue-gold grass
Bowed and murmured and bade them pass,
  Where a sigh of the sea-wind softly told them
There is no Time—Time never was.

And what if a sorrow were tolled to rest
Where the rich light mellowed away in the West,
  As a glory of fruit in an autumn orchard
Heaped and asleep o'er the sea's ripe breast?

Why should they heed it, what should they know
Of the years that come or the years that go,
  With the warm blue sky around and above them
And the wild thyme whispering to and fro?

For they heard in the dreamy dawn of day
A fairy harper faintly play,
  Follow me, follow me, little children,
Over the hills and far away;

Where the dew is bright on the heather-bells,
And the breeze in the clover sways and swells,
  As the waves on the blue sea wake and wander,
Over and under the braes and dells.

And the hare-bells tinkled and rang Ding dong
Bell in the dell as they danced along,
  And their feet were stained on the hills with honey,
And crushing the clover till evensong.

And, oh the ripples that rolled in rhyme
Under the wild blue banks of thyme,
  To the answering rhyme of the rolling ocean's
Golden glory of change and chime!

For they came to a stream and her fairy lover
Caught at her hand and swung her over,
  And the broad wet buttercups laughed and gilded
Their golden knees in the deep sweet clover.

There was never a lavrock up in the skies
Blithe as the laugh of their lips and eyes,
  As they glanced and glittered across the meadows
To waken the sleepy butterflies.

There was never a wave on the sea so gay
As the light that danced on their homeward way
  Where the waving ferns were a fairy forest
And a thousand years as yesterday.

She was eight years old that day,
Full of laughter and play;
Eight years old and Anwyl nine,—
Two young lovers were they.

And when the clouds like folded sheep
Were drowsing over the drowsy deep,
And like a rose in a golden cradle
Anwyl breathed on the breast of sleep,

Or ever the petals and leaves were furled
At the vesper-song of the sunset-world,
The sleepy young rose of nine sweet summers
Dreamed in his rose-bed cosily curled.

And what if the light of his nine bright years
Glistened with laughter or glimmered with tears,
Or gleamed like a mystic globe around him
White as the light of the sphere of spheres?

And what if a glory of angels there,
Starring an orb of ineffable air,
Came floating down from the Gates of jasper
That melt into flowers at a maiden's prayer?

And what if he dreamed of a fairy face
Wondering out of some happy place,
Quietly as a star at sunset
Shines in the rosy dreams of space?

For only as far as the west wind blows
The sweets of a swinging full-blown rose,
Eight years old and queen of the lilies
Little Etain slept—ah, how close!

At a flower-cry over the moonlit lane
In a cottage of roses dreamed Etain,
  And their purple shadows kissed at her lattice
And dappled her sigh-soft counterpane;

And or ever Etain with her golden head
Had nestled to sleep in her lily-white bed,
  She breathed a dream to her fairy lover,
Please God bless Anwyl and me, she said.

And a song arose in the rose-white West,
And a whisper of wings o'er the sea's bright breast,
  And a cry where the moon's old miracle wakened
A glory of pearl o'er the pine-forest.

Why should they heed it? What should they know
Of the years to come or the years to go?
  With the starry skies around and above them
And the roses whispering to and fro.

Ah, was it a song of the mystic morn
When into their beating hearts the thorn
  Should pierce through the red wet crumpled roses
And all the sorrow of love be born?

Ah, was it a cry of the wild wayside
Whereby one day they must surely ride,
  Out of the purple garden of passion
To Calvary, to be crucified?

Only the sound of the distant sea
Broke on the shores of Mystery,
  And tolled as a bell might toll for sorrow
Till Time be tombed in Eternity;

And in their dreams they only heard
Far away, one secret bird
  Sing, till the passionate purple twilight
Throbbed with the wonder of one sweet word:

One sweet word and the wonder awoke,
And the leaves and the flowers and the starlight spoke
  In silent rapture the strange old secret
That none e'er knew till the death-dawn broke;

One sweet whisper, and hand in hand
They wandered in dreams through fairyland,
  Rapt in the star-bright mystical music
Which only a child can understand.

But never a child in the world can tell
The wonderful tale he knows so well,
  Though ever as old Time dies in the sunset
It tolls and tolls like a distant bell.

Love, *love*, *love;* and they hardly knew
The sense of the glory that round them grew;
  But the world was a wide enchanted garden;
And the song, the song, the song rang true.

And they danced with the fairies in emerald rings
Arched by the light of their rainbow wings,
  And they heard the wild green Harper striking
A starlight over the golden strings.

Love, *oh love;* and they roamed once more
Through a forest of flowers on a fairy shore,
  And the sky was a wild bright laugh of wonder
And the West was a dream of the years of yore.

In other worlds I loved you, long ago:
Love that hath no beginning hath no end:
The heather whispers low and sweet and low,
In other worlds I loved you, long ago;
The meadows murmur and the firwoods know
The message that the kindling East shall send;
In other worlds I loved you, long ago:
Love that hath no beginning hath no end.

IX.

Out of the deep, my dream, out of the deep,
Yrma, thy voice came to me in my sleep,
And through a rainbow woven of human tears
I saw two lovers wandering down the years;
Two children, first, that roamed a sunset land,
And then two lovers wandering hand in hand,
Forgetful of their childhood's Paradise,
For nine more years had darkened in their eyes,
And heaven itself could hardly find again
Anwyl, the star-child, or the flower, Etain.

For on a day in May, as through the wood
With earth's new passion beating in his blood
He went alone, an empty-hearted youth,
Seeking he knew not what white flower of truth
Or beauty, on all sides he seemed to see
Swift subtle hints of some new harmony,
Yet all unheard, ideal, and incomplete,
A silent song compact of hopes and fears,
A music such as lights the wandering feet
Of Yrma when on earth she reappears.

And he forgot that sad grey City of Pain,
For all earth's old romance returned again,
And as he went, his dreaming soul grew glad
To think that he might meet with Galahad
Or Parsifal in some green glade of fern,
Or see between the boughs a helmet burn
And hear a joyous laugh kindle the sky
As through the wood Sir Launcelot rode by
With face upturned to take the sun like wine.
Ah, was it love that made the whole world shine
Like some great angel's face, blinded with bliss,
While Anwyl dreamed of bold Sir Amadis
And Guinevere's white arms and Iseult's kiss,
And that glad island in a golden sea
Where Arthur lives and reigns eternally?

Surely the heavens were one wide rose-white flame
As down the path to meet him Yrma came;
Ah, was it Yrma, with those radiant eyes,
That came to greet and lead him through the skies,
The skies that gloomed and gleamed so far above
The little wandering prayers of human love? . . .
He had forgotten all except the gleam
Of light when once he kissed her in a dream, . . .
For surely then he knew that long before
Their eyes had met upon some distant shore. . . .
Ah, was it Yrma whose red lips he met
Between the branches, where the leaves were wet?
Etain or Yrma, for it seemed her face
Bent down upon him from some happy place
And whispered to him, low and sweet and low,
In other worlds I loved you, long ago!

And he, too, knew his love could never die,
Because his queen was throned beyond the sky.

Yet in sweet mortal eyes he met her now
And kissed Etain beneath the hawthorn bough,
And dared to dream his infinite dream was true
On earth and reign with Etain, dream he knew
Why leaves were green and skies were fresh and blue;
Yea, dream he knew, as children dream they know
They knew all this a million years ago,
  And watched the sea-waves wistfully westward wend
And heard a voice whispering in their flow
And calling through the silent sunset-glow
  Love that hath no beginning hath no end.
For ah, the deep red roses of royal June
Kissed in the ring of the yellow moon
    Long, long ago;
Just as they kiss one another to-day, you know;
When the mellow moon is large and low,
And wherever the pearly moon-winds blow
From over the sunset-coloured sea
The rich horizons of whispering roses
Brimming and dimming the purple garden-closes
With all their swimming petals melt and swoon
    Murmuring mysteriously,
Into the heart of the honey-coloured moon.

And so, when the cushats that cooed the whole day long
Were far too tired even to croon,
There in the dim green heart of the wood
They nestled their heads in their wild soft wings,
And a star came out in the sunset-glow
While the white waves glistened far below,

And the boughs were swayed by the same sweet song
That the old sea sings
To-day as it swings in the moon-dawn to and fro;
And there on the shore these lovers stood
And listened, oh long and long,
Just as we listen to-day, you know,
To the song of the sea-waves, even so
They leant and listened, oh long ago
Long, how long ago.

Ah, could they see in the Valley of Gloom
That clove the cliffs behind the City;
Ah, could they hear in the forest of Doom
The peril that neared without pause or pity?
Behind the veils of ivy and vine,
Wild musk-roses and white woodbine,
In glens that were wan as with moonlit tears
And rosy with ghosts of eglantine
And pale as with lilies of long-past years,
Ah, could they see, could they hear, could they know
Behind that beautiful outward show,
Behind the pomp and glory of life
That seething old anarchic strife?
For there in many a dim blue glade
Where the rank red poppies burned,
And if perchance some dreamer strayed
He nevermore returned,
Cold incarnate memories
Of earth's retributory throes,
Deadly desires and agonies
Dark as the worm that never dies,
In the outer night arose,

And waited under those wonderful skies
With Hydra heads and mocking eyes
That winked upon the waning West
From out the gloom of the oak-forest,
Till all the wild profound of wood
That o'er the haunted valley slept
Glowed with eyes like pools of blood
As, lusting after a hideous food,
Through the haggard vistas crept
Without a cry, without a hiss,
The serpent broods of the abyss,
Ancestral folds in darkness furled
Since the beginnings of the world.
Ring upon awful ring uprose
That obscure heritage of foes,
The exceeding bitter heritage
Which still a jealous God bestows
From inappellable age to age,
The ghostly worms that softly move
Through every grey old corse of love
And creep across the coffined years
To batten on our blood and tears;
And there were hooded shapes of death
Gaunt and grey, cruel and blind,
Stealing softly as a breath
Through the woods that loured behind
The City; hooded shapes of fear
Slowly, slowly stealing near;
While all the gloom that round them rolled
With intertwisting coils grew cold.
And there with leer and gap-toothed grin
Many a gaunt ancestral Sin
With clutching fingers, white and thin,

Strove to put the boughs aside;
And still before them all would glide
Down the wavering moon-white track
One lissom figure, clad in black;
Who wept at mirth and mocked at pain
And murmured a song of the wind and the rain;
His laugh was wild with a secret grief;
His eyes were deep like woodland pools;
And, once and again, as his face drew near
In a rosy gloaming of eglantere,
All the ghosts that gathered there
Bowed together, naming his name:
Lead us, ah thou *Shadow of a Leaf*,
Child and master of all our shame,
Fool of Doubt and King of Fools.

Now the linnet had ended his even-song,
And the lark dropt down from his last wild ditty
And ruffled his wings and his speckled breast
Blossom-wise over his June-sweet nest;
While winging wistfully into the West
As a fallen petal is wafted along
The last white sea-mew sought for rest;
And, over the gleaming heave and swell
Of the swinging seas,
Drowsily breathed the dreaming breeze.
Then, suddenly, out of the Valley of Gloom
That clove the cliffs behind the City,
Out of the silent forest of Doom
That clothed the valley with clouds of fear
Swelled the boom of a distant bell
Once, and the towers of the City of Pain
Echoed it, without hope or pity.

The tale of that tolling who can tell?
That dark old music who shall declare?
Who shall interpret the song of the bell?

Is it nothing to you, all ye that hear,
Sorrowed the bell, *Is it nothing to you?*
Is it nothing to you? the shore-wind cried,
Is it nothing to you? the cliffs replied.
But the low light laughed and the skies were blue,
And this was only the song of the bell.

X.

Anwyl.

A darkened casement in a darker room
Was all his home, whence weary and bowed and white
He watched across the slowly gathering gloom
The slowly westering light.

"Dreamer of dreams," he took the poet's rhyme
To taste his own sweet agony at ease,
"Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,"
Would that all dreams might cease!

Bitterness in his heavy-clouded eyes,
Bitterness as of heaven's intestine wars
Brooded; he looked upon the unfathomed skies
And whispered—to the stars—

His ballad of the secret truce and tryst
He kept with love and heaven and death and doom;
Like some more tragic Romeo that has missed
His heart's appointed tomb.

Vague as the darkened roses in the pale
Blue gloom of even-tide, his murmured dream
Floated like some forgotten phantom's wail
Where broken pillars gleam

And fragments of an unknown altar shine
And pieces of the foolish idol house,
While Nature strives to hide the poor sad shrine
Under her green sweet boughs.

Thy dark eyes to mine, Etain, thy dark eyes to mine,
And we will seek the unknown land where life and love entwine,
Beyond the golden shore of noon and the starry stream that flows
Deep in the crimson twilight of the illimitable Rose,
Where the scented air is laden with a sound of happy sighs,
And music floats through flower-soft skies.

Thy red lips to mine, Etain, thy red lips to mine,
And we will seek the Wonderland where all the flowers entwine,
For here the wings of music with mournful tears are wet,
And laughter only lightens on the lips that can forget;
But far, far away, there is an end of tears,
An end of the weary flight of years.

Etain of the rose-white breast and dusky floating hair,
Let us go out at daybreak to the land that knows no care,
To the land of youth eternal, where the storm winds never blow,
And there is no more tempest, nor any hail or snow;
And we will cross the seas of Time that beat the shores of Pain,
Rose of my dream, Etain.

He ceased: his eyes grew wet luxuriously,
  There was no sorrow in all the world so sweet
As this that wondered when the sea and sky,
  When hope and heaven should meet.

Some day, he said, she will grow tired of this
  That she calls life, and looking far above
See throned among the great eternities
  This dream of mine, this love;

Love that has given my soul these wings of fire
  To beat in glory above the sapphire sea,
Until the wings of the infinite desire
  Close in infinity;

Love that has taken the glory of hawthorn boughs,
  And all the dreaming beauty of hazel skies,
As ministers to the radiance of her brows
  And haunted April eyes;

Love that is hidden so deep beneath the dust
  Of little daily duties and delights,
Till that reproachful face of hers grows just
  And God at last requites

A soul whose dream was deeper than the skies,
  A heart whose hope was wider than the sea,
Yet could not enter through his true love's eyes
  Their grey infinity.

And so I know I wound her all day long
  Because my heart must seem so far away;
And even my love completes the silent wrong
  For all that it can say

Seems vast and meaningless to mortal sense;
  Its vague desire can never reach its goal
Till knowledge vanishes in omniscience
  And God surrounds her soul,

Breaking its barriers down and flooding in
  Through all her wounds in one almighty tide,
Mingling her soul with that great Love wherein
  My soul waits, glorified.

XI.

ETAIN.

My love is dying, dying in my heart;
  There is no song in heaven for such as I
Who watch the days and years of youth depart,
  The bloom decay and die;

The rose that withers in the hollow cheek,
  The leaden rings that mark us old and wise;
And Time that writes what Pity dares not speak
  Around the fading eyes.

He dreams he loves; but only loves his dream;
  And in his dream he never can forget
Abana seems a so much mightier stream
  And Pharpar wider yet;

Ah, if he would but even now return
  Into these little and so easy ways
Of human kindness, the great stars would burn
  As near as when his days

Are spent in dreaming of the passionate deeds
That he would do: he would be crucified
For me, he thinks; but always my heart bleeds,
And his is deified.

The little deeds of love that light the shrine
Of common daily duties with such gleams
Of heaven, to me are scarcely less divine
Than those poor wandering dreams

Of deeds that never happen; oh, I know
So well that if the time came he would quail;
I see the cold sweat glistening on his brow,
I see the lips grow pale

And babble, and the white-ringed eyes grow wide;
While I—that love him with such human need—
Should take the bitter wounds in palm and side
And still, still dumbly bleed.

Could I not act him all his poets have sung?
Let him be wounded and the hunters near,
No tigress that is battling for her young
Could mock at every spear

As I, Lord Christ; and I could give him this,
This heart he cannot find in heaven above;
This heart, this heart of all the eternities,
This life of mine, this love;

Love that is lord of all the world at once
And never bade the encircled spirit roam
To the circle's bound, beyond the moons and suns,
But makes each heart its home,

And every home the heart of Space and Time,
And each and all a heaven if love could reign;
One infinite untranscended heaven sublime
With God's own joy and pain.

Why, that was what God meant, to set us here
In Eden, when he saw that all was good;
And we have made the sun black with despair,
And turned the moon to blood.

So has Love taught me that too learnéd tongue,
And in his poorer wisdom made me wise;
I grew so proud of the red drops we wrung
From all philosophies.

My heart is narrow, foolish, what you will;
But this I know God meant who set us here,
And gave each soul the Infinities to fulfil
From its own widening sphere.

To annex new regions to the soul's domain,
To expand the circle of the golden hours,
Till it enfolds again and yet again
New heavens, new fields, new flowers,

Oh, this is well; but still the central heart
Is here at home, not wandering like the wind
That gathers nothing, but must still depart
Leaving a waste behind.

Where is the song I sang that April morn,
When all the poet in his eyes awoke
My sleeping heart to heaven; and love was born?
For while the glad day broke

We met; and as the softly kindling skies
Thrilled through the scented vistas of the wood
I felt the sudden love-light in his eyes
Kindle my beating blood.

Happy day, happy day,
Chasing the clouds of the night away
And bidding the dreams of the dawn depart
Over the freshening April blue,
Till the blossoms awake to welcome the May,
And the world is made anew;
And the blackbird sings on the dancing spray
With eyes of glistening dew;
"Happy, happy, happy day;"
For he knows that his love is true;
He knows that his love is true, my heart,
He knows that his love is true!

I cannot sing it: these tears blind me: love,
Oh love, come back before it is too late,
Why, even Christ came down to us from above:
I think His love was great;

Yet he stood knocking, knocking at the door
Until his piteous hands were worn with scars;
He did not hide that crown of love he wore
Among the lonely stars.

This round of hours, the daily flowers I cull
Are more to me than all the rolling spheres,
A wounded bird at hand more pitiful
Than some great seraph's tears.

How should I join the great wise choir above
With my starved spirit's pale inhuman dearth,
Who never heard the cry of heavenly love
Rise from the sweet-souled earth?

Oh, once he asked if I would hold him true
To Love, one God, one Love, while he should live,
If I died first; I think he hardly knew
My heart—he would forgive

My answering "No," if he knew all; yes all;
How could I bid my love remain alone
Entombed? God knows it hurt me to forestall
The end; ah, had he known

My whole heart bled to say it! Could it be
For my sake? No, indeed, I think I find
More selfishness in such a chivalry
As makes Love deaf and blind;

A chivalry that has no other goal
Than its own glory! What he wished to see
Was whether I myself could save my soul
For him, eternally.

Oh, Love should find it easy; but he knew
His little worth, and made a false ideal
Of his own dream and held it up as true,
Reproaching all the real,

The royal love, the soul within my soul,
The heart's blood I could spill for him like wine,
While he still dreamed his dim immortal goal
Remained the more divine.

Yet it is I he needs, and I for whom
His greed exceeds, his dreams fly wide of the mark!
Is it all self? I wander in the gloom;
The ways of God grow dark;

I watch the rose that withers in the cheek,
The leaden rings that mark us old and wise;
And Time that writes what Pity dares not speak
Around the fading eyes.

My love is dying, dying in my heart;
There is no song in heaven for such as I
Who watch the days and years of youth depart,
The bloom decay and die.

XII.

She was eight years old that day,
Full of laughter and play;
Eight years old and Anwyl nine,—
Two young lovers were they.

And ever as he went the unknown end
Faded before him, back and back and back
He saw new empty heavens for ever bend
Over his endless track;

And memory, burning with new hopeless fire,
Showed him how every passing infinite hour
Made some new Crucifix for the World's Desire
In some new wayside flower:

He saw what joy and beauty owed to death;
How all the world was one great sacrifice
Of Christ, in whom all creatures that draw breath
Share God's eternal skies;

How Love is lord of all the world at once;
And never bids the encircled spirit roam
To the circle's bound, beyond the moons and suns,
But makes each heart its home,

And every home the heart of Space and Time,
And each and all a heaven if love could reign;
One infinite untranscended heaven sublime
With God's own joy and pain.

She was eight years old that day,—
Two young lovers were they.

XIII.

Out of the deep, my dream, out of the deep,
A little child came to him in his sleep
And led him back to what was Paradise
Before the years had darkened in his eyes,
And showed him what he ne'er could lose again—
The light that once enshrined the child Etain.

Ah, was it Yrma with those radiant eyes
That came to greet and lead him through the skies;
Ay; all the world was one wide rose-white flame,
As down the path to meet him Yrma came

And caught the child up in her arms and cried,
This is my child that moved in Etain's side,
Thy child and Etain's: I the unknown ideal
And she the rich, the incarnate, breathing real
Are one; for me thou never canst attain
But by the love I yield thee for Etain;
Even as through Christ thy soul allays its dearth,
Love's heaven is only compassed upon earth;
And by that love, in thine own Etain's eyes
Thou shalt find all God's untranscended skies.

Born in the City of Pain;
Ah, God knows,
That Death shall turn to delight again
And a wound to a red, red rose.

She was eight years old that day,
Full of laughter and play;
Eight years old and Anwyl nine,—
Two young lovers were they.

And God sighed in the sunset, and the sea
Grew quieter than the hills: the mystery
Of ocean, earth and sky was like a word
Uttered, but all unheard,
Uttered by every wave and cloud and leaf
With all the immortal glory of mortal grief;
And every wave that broke its heart of gold
In music on the rainbow-dazzled shore
Seemed telling, strangely telling, evermore
A story that must still remain untold.

Oh, *Once upon a time*, and o'er and o'er
  As aye the *Happy ever after* came
The enchanted waves lavished their faery lore

And tossed a foam-bow and a rosy flame
  Around the whispers of the creaming foam,
Till the old rapture with the new sweet name
  Through all the old romance began to roam.

XIV.

And those two lovers only heard
  —Oh, love is a dream that knows no waking—
Far away, one secret bird,
Where all the roses breathed one word,
And every crispel on the beach—
  Oh, love is a sea that is ever breaking!—
Lisped it in a sweeter speech;
As hand in hand, by the sunset sea
That breaks on the shores of mystery,
They stood in the gates of the City of Pain
To watch the wild waves flutter and beat
In roses of white soft light at their feet,
Roses of delicate music and light,
Music and moonlight under their feet.
Crumbling and flashing and softly crashing
In rainbow colours that dazzle and wane
And wither and waken and, wild with delight,
Dance and dance to a mystic tune
And scatter their leaves in a flower-soft rain
Over the shimmering golden shore
Between the West and the waking moon,

Between the sunset and the night;
And then they sigh for the years of yore
And gather their glory together again,
Petal by petal and gleam by gleam,
Till, all in one rushing rose-bright stream
They dazzle back to the deep once more,
For the dream of the sea is an endless dream,
And love is a sea that hath no shore,
And the roses dance as they danced before.

XV.

In other worlds I loved you, long ago:
  Love that hath no beginning hath no end:
Low to her heart he breathed it, sweet and low;
In other worlds I loved you, long ago;
This is a word that all the sea-waves know
  And whisper as through the shoreless West they wend
In other worlds I loved you, long ago:
  Love that hath no beginning hath no end.

XVI.

"Yet love can die!" she murmured once again;
  For this was in that City by the Sea,
That old grey City of Pain,
  Built on the shifting shores of Mystery
And mocked by all the immeasurable main.
  "Yes; love can die!"
Under the deep eternal sky
  His deeper voice caught up that deep refrain;
"A year ago, and under yonder sun
Earth had no Heaven to hold our hearts in one!

For me there was no love, afar or nigh:
And, oh, if love were thus in time begun,
Love, even our love, in time must surely die."
Then memory murmured "No";
And he remembered, a million years ago,
He saw the sea-waves wistfully westward wend;
And heard her voice whispering in their flow
And calling through the silent sunset-glow,
Love that hath no beginning hath no end.

"Love cannot die!" How wild, how deep the joy
That knows no death can e'er destroy
What cannot bear destruction! By these eyes
I know that, ere the fashioning of the skies,
Or ever the sun and moon and stars were made
I loved you. Sweet, I am no more afraid.

"Love like ours can never die!"
Under the deep eternal sky
Her wild sweet voice caught up that deep refrain:
There, in that silent City by the Sea,
Listening the wild-wave music of Infinity,
There, in that old grey City of mortal pain,
Their voices mingled in mystic unison
With that immortal harmony
Which holds the warring worlds in one.
Their Voice, one Voice, yet manifold,
Possessed the seas, the fields, the sky,
With utterance of the dream that cannot die;
Possessed the West's wild rose and dappled gold,
And that old secret of the setting sun
Which, to the glory of Eternity,

Time, tolling like a distant bell,
Evermore faints to tell,
And, ever telling, never yet has told.

One, and yet manifold
Arose their Voice, oh strangely one again
With murmurs of the immeasurable main;
As, far beyond earth's cloudy bars,
Their Soul surpassed the sunset and the stars,
And all the heights and depths of temporal pain,
Till seas of seraph music round them rolled.

And, in that mystic plane,
They felt their mortal years
Break away as a dream of pain
Breaks in a stream of tears.

Love, of whom life had birth,
See now, is death not sweet?
Love, is this heaven or earth?
Both are beneath thy feet.

Nay, both within thy heart!
Oh Love, the glory nears;
The Gates of Pearl are flung apart,
The Rose of Heaven appears.

Across the deeps of change,
Like pangs of visible song,
What angel-spirits, remote and strange,
Thrill through the starry throng?

And oh, what wind that blows
Over the mystic Tree,
What whisper of the sacred Rose,
What murmur of the sapphire Sea,

What dreams that faint and fail
From harps of burning gold,
But tell in heaven the sweet old tale
An earthly sunset told?

Hark! like a holy bell
Over that spirit Sea,
Time, in the world it loves so well,
Tolls for Eternity.

Earth calls us once again,
And, through the mystic Gleam,
The grey old City of mortal pain
Dawns on the heavenly dream.

Sweet as the voice of birds
At dawn, the years return,
With little songs and sacred words
Of human hearts that yearn.

The sweet same waves resound
Along our earthly shore;
But now this earth we lost and found
Is heaven for evermore.

Hark! how the cosmic choir,
In sea and flower and sun,
Recalls that triumph of desire
Which made all music one:

One universal soul,
Completing joy with pain,
And harmonising with the Whole
The temporal refrain.

Until from hill and plain,
From bud and blossom and tree,
From shadow and shining after rain,
From cloud and clovered bee,

From earth and sea and sky,
From laughter and from tears,
One molten golden harmony
Fulfils the yearning years.

Love, of whom death had birth,
See now, is life not sweet?
Love, is this heaven or earth?
Both are beneath thy feet.

In other worlds I loved you, long ago;
Love that hath no beginning hath no end;
The sea-waves whisper, low and sweet and low,
In other worlds I loved you, long ago;
The May-boughs murmur and the roses know
The message that the dawning moon shall send;
In other worlds I loved you, long ago;
Love that hath no beginning hath no end.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS.

THE LOOM OF YEARS.

By ALFRED NOYES.

PRESS OPINIONS.

The Times (in a review of a column and a half).—Extraordinary promise..... His singing puts one in mind of the lads commemorated in Stevenson's alcaics :—

> Brave lads in olden musical centuries
> Sang, night by night, adorable choruses,
> Sat late by alehouse doors in April
> Chanting in joy as the moon was rising.

The Standard.—Mr Noyes is something of a symbolist and something of a mystic. Several of his poems breathe that strange yearning for the Infinite and the elusive, that

> "Desire of the moth for the star,
> Of the night for the morrow,"

which is perceptible in so much that is most interesting in the contemporary poetry of England and France. It is characteristic of the whole school that, like their exemplar, Shelley, they are studiously and deliberately vague. Sometimes they are apt to become so esoteric that only the initiated can understand them. This, however, is not the case with Mr Noyes, whose style is lucid and simple.

The Speaker.—To read it is to pass with delight from one beauty to another to the very end of the volume. No ill-wrought line, no overstrained expression, no lapse of melody offends the eye and ear, for Mr Noyes, of whom we know nothing beyond this book, is a sure and cunning workman, with a fine technical command of his material.....(Quotation.).....That has a magical charm; fine thought is wedded to a haunting rhythm, and the music vibrates and vibrates away, and is caught and repeated, and fades and swells as the hand of a poet touches the strings.....Mr Noyes is a poet. No other word is adequate.

Daily Chronicle.—.....Such effects as that give the book a prophetic interest that outweighs its intrinsic value.

Glasgow Herald.—.....'The Statue' might have been written by Keats.

George Meredith.—'Michael Oaktree' is worthy of praise, not only as a performance, but also as an intimation of strength coming.

THE FLOWER OF OLD JAPAN.

By ALFRED NOYES.

PRESS OPINIONS.

The Times.—Mr Noyes so charges it with fascination and terror and kaleidoscopic colour that most readers, we dare to promise, will take its ninety pages at a sitting and turn back to read again. We said just now that he has a fine eye for colour, and will quote a couple of stanzas in proof:.....But, indeed, quotation does injustice to a poem which owes its effectiveness to the piling up of picture upon picture with such rapidity that the reader might imagine himself jingling in a palanquin down the long avenue of an Eastern bazaar heaped with silks, tea-chests, trays of jewels, vases, fans, sun-shades, carved ivories, and lacquered arms, and thronged with merchants, seamen, bonzes, pirates, apes, macaws, and mandarins. And through all, as befits the story of a childish dream, there runs an exquisite sense of terror. Also the dream manages to keep throughout the inconsecutiveness proper to dreams—and yet has an artistic unity.....filled with magic and beauty.

The Spectator.—It is much easier to imagine than to put into words what Mr Noyes means by his 'Flower of Old Japan.' Some of us, perhaps, can remember how we built romances out of the oddities of a "willow-pattern" plate. If so, we shall be able to understand Mr Noyes.....(Quotation.).....The fact is that the charm of the verse eludes us when we try to describe it. We feel it; but we cannot exactly say why, or define it in any intelligible way. Shall we say that it reminds us of 'Alice in Wonderland'? It does after a fashion, though it is not in the least an imitation; and it differs, too, in having a certain seriousness in its phantasy.

The Glasgow Herald.—Really a masterpiece.

The Standard.—Impressively grotesque.

Pall Mall Gazette.—Contains a note of the grotesque that is welcome in a modern poet.

Academy and Literature.—.....That is, crudely and frankly, the state of mind in which the present writer "attacks" the average little volume of English "poetry." But when we imagine that a poet is really speaking to us across one

knows not what chasm of eternal separation—ah! then it becomes all quite different; then we listen, as men always will listen, to the voice of the human magician in the very teeth of abstract science. Such a poet, haunted by the infinite vistas of remote memory into which he has surely peered, has written this volume.....We have quoted much from this exquisite little book, because in this case quotation is the most significant form of praise. These simple verses have caught the aroma of a lost fragrance which only poets can restore to a generation arid even in its dreams.

Bookman.—This is an interesting book, a beautiful book. The early part of the poem-story has much of the charm of R. L. Stevenson, and as we read on from 'Embarkation' in the nursery fire-light in quest of the ruby wishing-stone we are delighted and excited by the really wonderful and lavish array of beautiful words; the lines glow and scintillate, the mind's eye is almost dazzled by the quick exquisite pictures, delicate, grim, dreamy, fairylike.

The Speaker.—In many respects 'The Loom of Years' was perhaps the most remarkable book published of late years in this particular department of literature. Nearly every line of it revealed the strong and original poetic genius of its author. It had insight; it vibrated with a haunting and beautiful music; and it was transfused with a glowing and picturesque imagination.....If Mr Noyes can proceed as he has begun we shall some day have reason to be proud that we were amongst the first to hail him poet. Mr Noyes' second book will deepen the impression produced by his first.....To carry out this design (of 'The Flower of Old Japan') triumphantly a man must have something of Coleridge, the Coleridge of 'Christabel' and the 'Ancient Mariner,' and something, too, of Browning. These elements Mr Noyes possesses; his tale is mystical and awe-inspiring, yet it has tenderness and flashes of a grim kind of humour.....It goes from peaceful delight without a break into regions of dreadful forewarning, and emerges into magic palaces of bloom and colour and song; but through all and above all it is an allegory of life and desire and attainment seen in the visions of children under the magnificent light of a dream-fancy..... Withal, Mr Noyes is strikingly original.....The whole poem is of remarkable beauty and absorbing interest. We look forward with keen anticipation to his future work.

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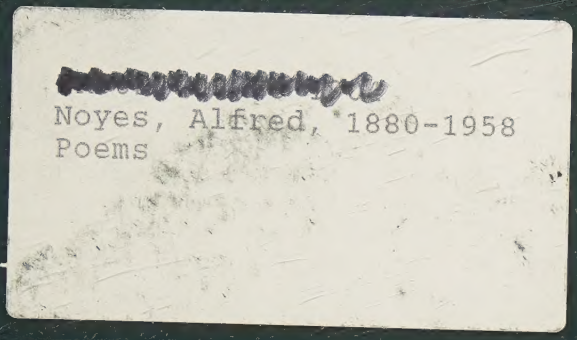
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